VISIT…

EXTREME SLAP BASS - A DICTIONARY OF GROOVES

BY
JOHN M. SHAUGHNESSY II

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FORWARD

Welcome to the first edition of Extreme Slap Bass! This book is the result of two years of work. When I originally started, I had no idea how large the finished product would turn out to be (The original manuscript is over 50 pages long, and contained 2 CDs of examples!). For that reason, I have chosen to release it on CD-ROM. The CD contains the book (in PDF Format) with 175 examples (in both standard notation and Tab), as well as the audio examples in MP3 Format. You will need the Adobe Acrobat reader to view the examples (available as a free download from many sites – try http://home.cnet.com).
You will also need an audio player capable of playing MP3 files (most players already support this format).

In 15 years of teaching bass, I would say that the number one request from students is to "Show me how to do that slap stuff". I got tired of writing the same examples over and over, so I decided to collect my favorite licks and techniques in one book. My approach is a little different from other method books, however. Instead of lots of talking and a few examples, I have chosen to present a lot of variations on basic techniques and scales. For you ex-drummers, you will notice that the organization is similar to a drum method book (I consider slap bass to be a form of "melodic drumming", but that discussion is for another book). Because I have kept the dialog to a minimum, I would not consider this a book for beginners; you should have some idea of basic slap technique (There are many excellent books, videos and instructors out there that can show you the basics).

Also, this is not the last word on slap bass playing. There are as many different styles as there are bass players. I grew up listening to the players of the 70's/80's, so my style tends to reflect that. If you don't like something, feel free to change it to fit your style.

One more thing: Although you may steal these riffs for your personal use (I got lots more), The material on the CD is copyrighted and may not be reproduced without permission. Any questions, comments, typos, etc. may be reported to me at johngoogleplex@carolina.rr.com

That's it! Have fun gettin' your groove on!

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

You can think of this book as a dictionary that you can use to create your own basslines. There is no "right" way to do it – you can go through a page at a time, or skip around and practice the examples that grab you – it's up to you. Also, try changing keys, tempos, and shifting the beat around – say, staring an example on a pickup instead of a downbeat, or beat 2 instead of beat one. The possibilities are endless!

Although this book was written for four string bass, 5,6 and 7 string players can move the examples up or down a string as needed.

The audio examples are recorded in groups of 10 (1-10, 11-20 etc.). There is a click track in the right channel, which can be removed by turning down the volume. Also the examples are recorded as data, so they will not play in many home stereo systems.

The Tab examples are in standard (EADG) tuning, and the special symbols I have used are explained in the table of symbols ahead.

Finally, if anyone is thinking of "sampling" these riffs for their own compositions, remember this material is copyrighted (please email me for permission first). Be advised that there is some bleed-through of the click track into the bass tracks as well.

I have organized the examples in this book into eight sections, each of which represents an element of slap bass technique:

Section 1: Octaves - Octaves are the heart of slap-and-pop technique. You can create an infinite number of ideas from a single octave by varying the rhythm, tempo, and R.H. thumb/pop combinations. The examples here show some commonly used rhythms and ideas.

Section 2: Hammer on/Pull off - Hammer ons and pull offs are produced and controlled by the left hand. Strong fingers will help to control the speed and intensity (Tip: pull down a little when releasing a pull off to keep it going). The examples feature many different combinations, including cross-string hammering, trills, and open string pedals.

Section 3: Rhythm Patterns - This section contains many common patterns and techniques that I find useful in my own playing. These patterns can be mixed with any of the other elements presented here to create endless possibilities. Some of the techniques presented are the left hand choke, use of the left hand thumb to fret notes, single string slap/pop, and "paradiddles" (a syncopated pattern used by drummers that I have adapted for bass. Ex. 64-69 feature this pattern.).

Section 4: Pentatonic Scales – Pentatonic Scales are probably the most widely used scales in slap bass playing. They are easy to play, work well in many musical situations, and are ideal for use with hammer ons and pull offs. The three pentatonic types used here are the minor (C,Eb,F,G,Bb), major (C,D,E,G,A,C), and "blues"-a pentatonic minor scale with an added chromatic note (C,Eb,F,F#,G,Bb).

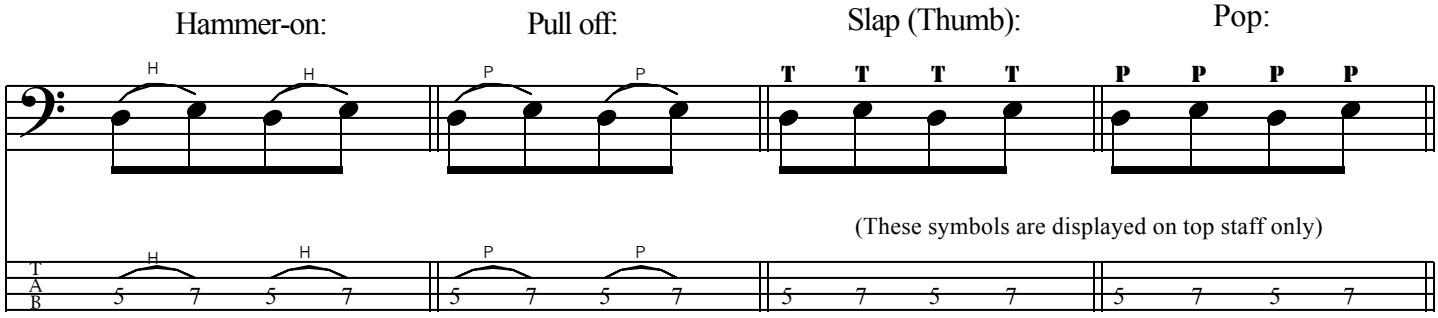
Section 5: Dorian and Mixolydian Modes – These scales are **THE** sound of Funk bass playing. Listen to songs such as "Fire" by the Ohio Players, "We want the Funk" by Parliament or "Around the World" by the Red Hot Chili Peppers and you'll hear these scales in action. Note that the Dorian (C,D,Eb,F,G,A,Bb,C) and the Mixolydian (C,D,E,F,G,A,Bb,C) are identical except for the third note; they are often used together in the same riff, as well as combined with the Pentatonic minor and "Blues" scales.

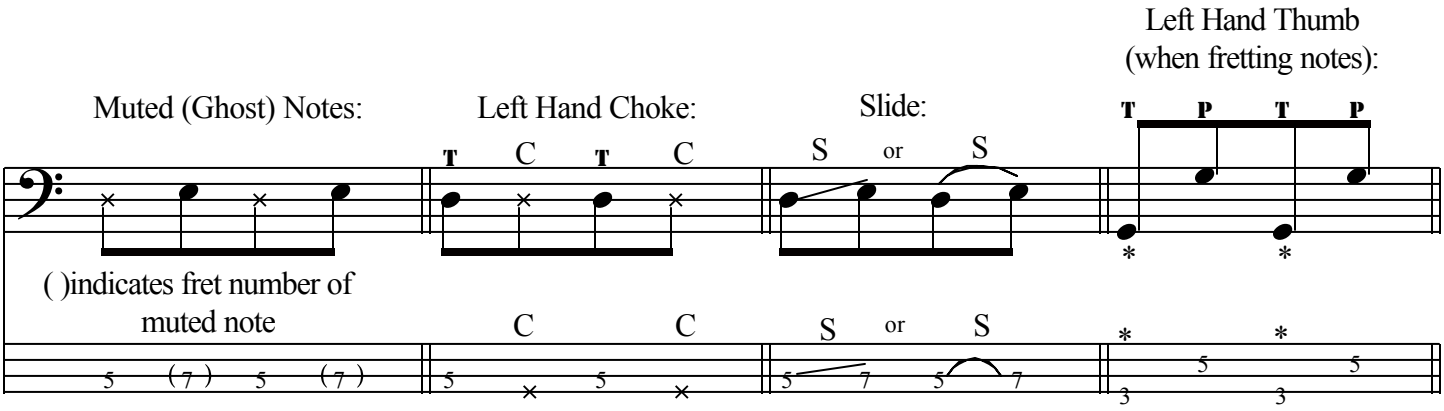
Section 6: Dominant 7^{th} - Dominant 7^{th} chords (C,E,G,Bb = C7) are easily identified by the dissonant sound of the third and seventh notes (In a C7, these would be E and Bb.), also called the "tritone". Many of the riffs in this section make use of this tritone through double-stops (two notes played at once), and arpeggios (chord notes that are played one at a time).

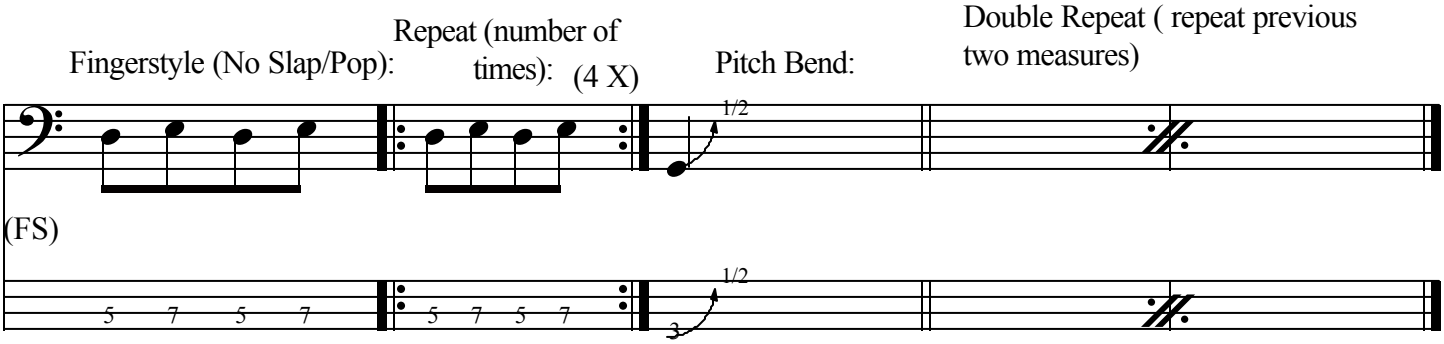
Section 7: Natural and Harmonic Minor Scales – These scales became popular in slap bass playing in the 1980's, and are used in many R&B and Gospel tunes today. These scales are identical with the exception of the seventh note, which is raised a half step in the Harmonic Minor (Natural Minor: C,D,Eb,F,G,Ab,Bb,C; Harmonic Minor: C,D,Eb,F,G,Ab,B,C).

Section 8: Chord Progressions – Although a thorough discussion of harmony is beyond the scope of this book, I have presented some of the common chord progressions used with slap bass playing. These progressions tend to cycle; that is, they repeat the same sequence of chords over and over again in the tune.

Table of Symbols







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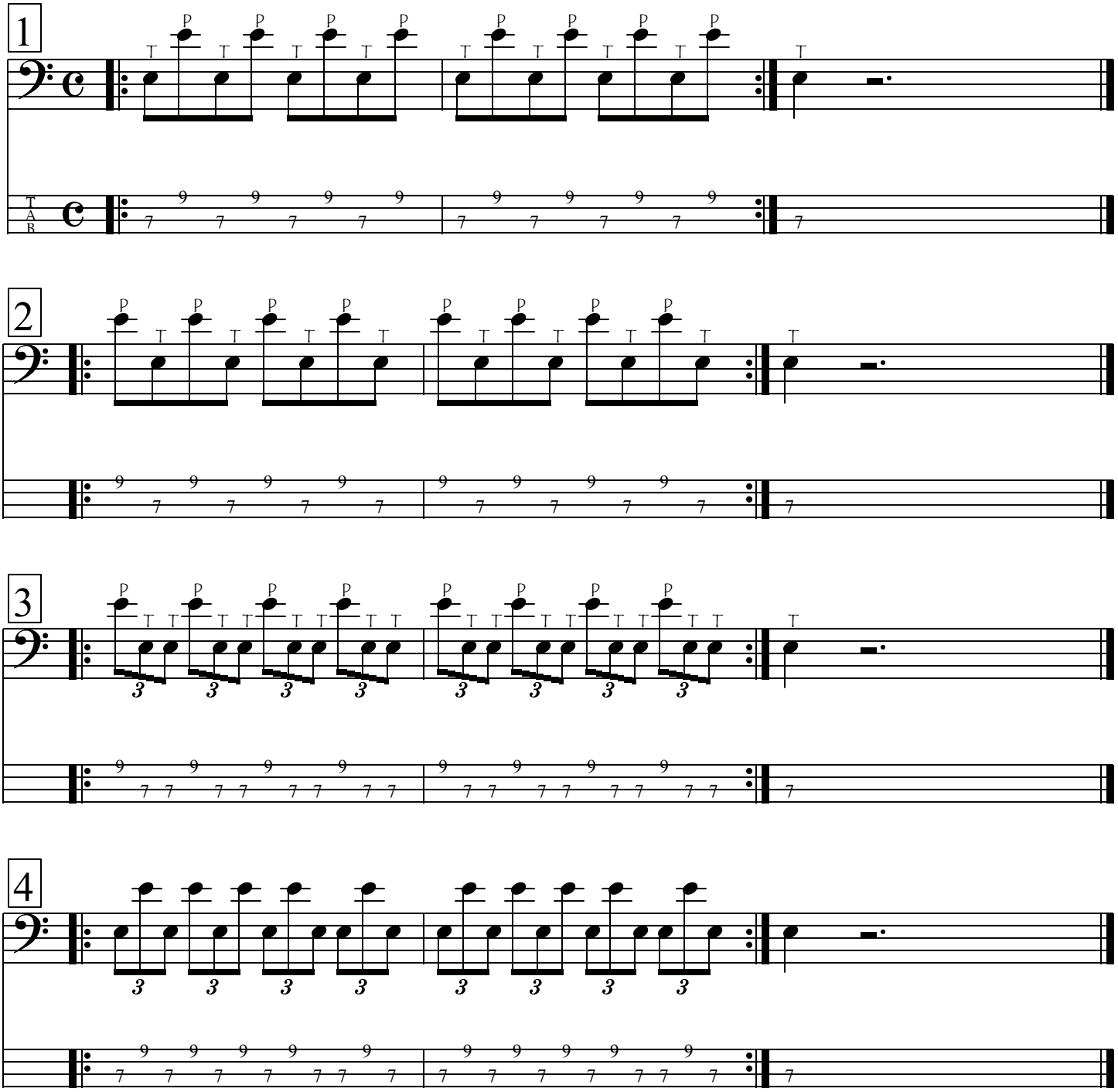

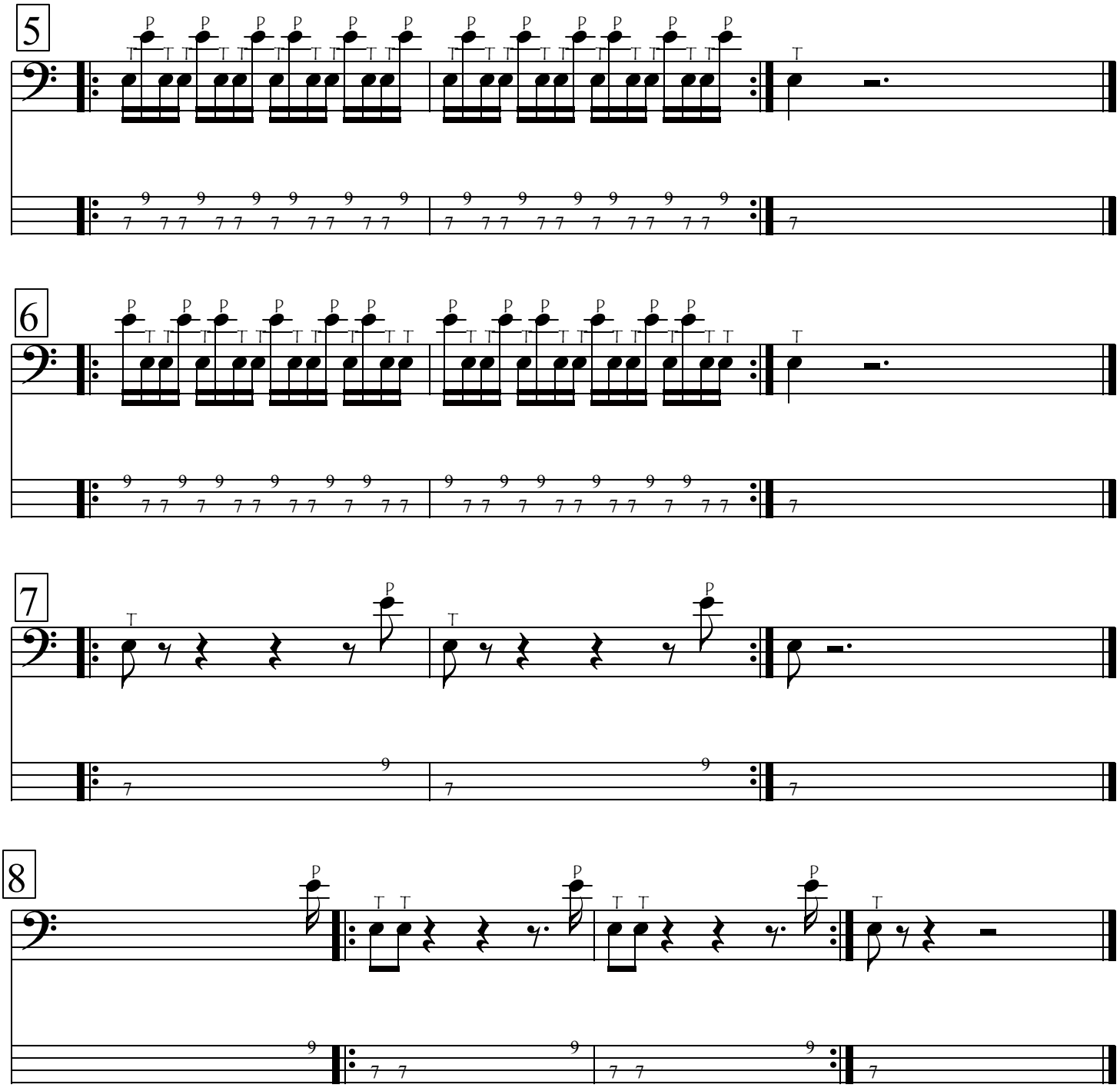
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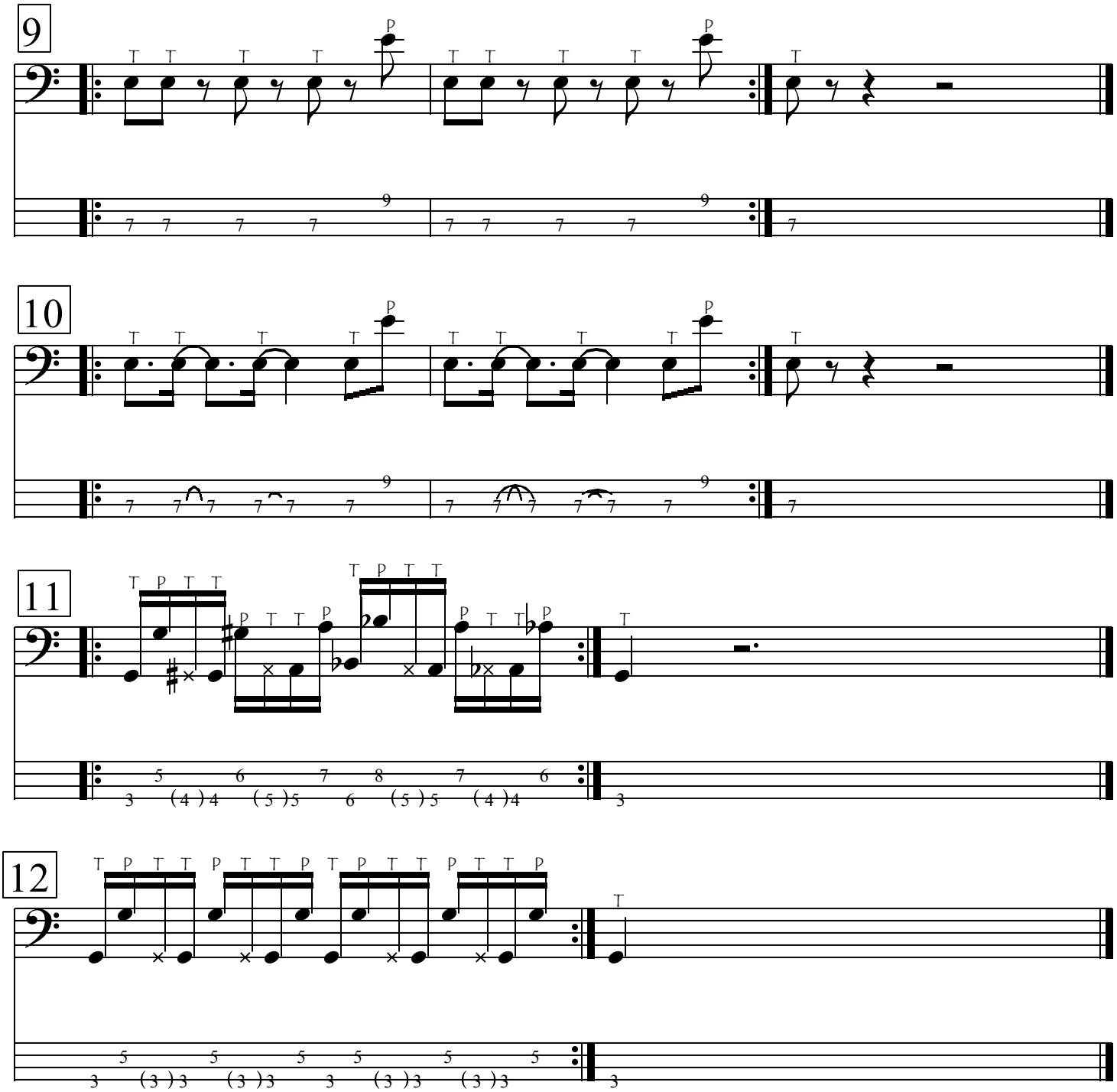
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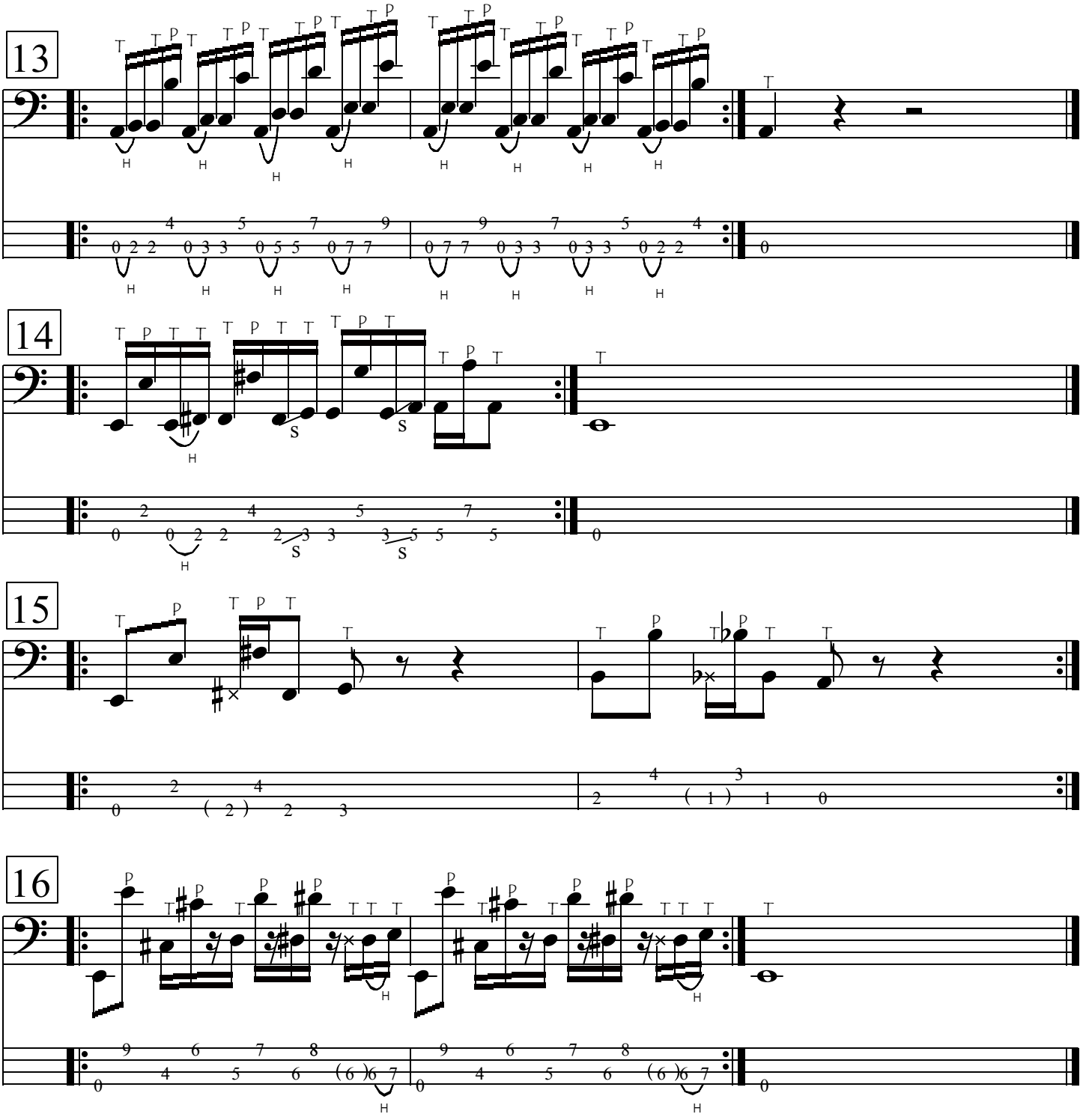
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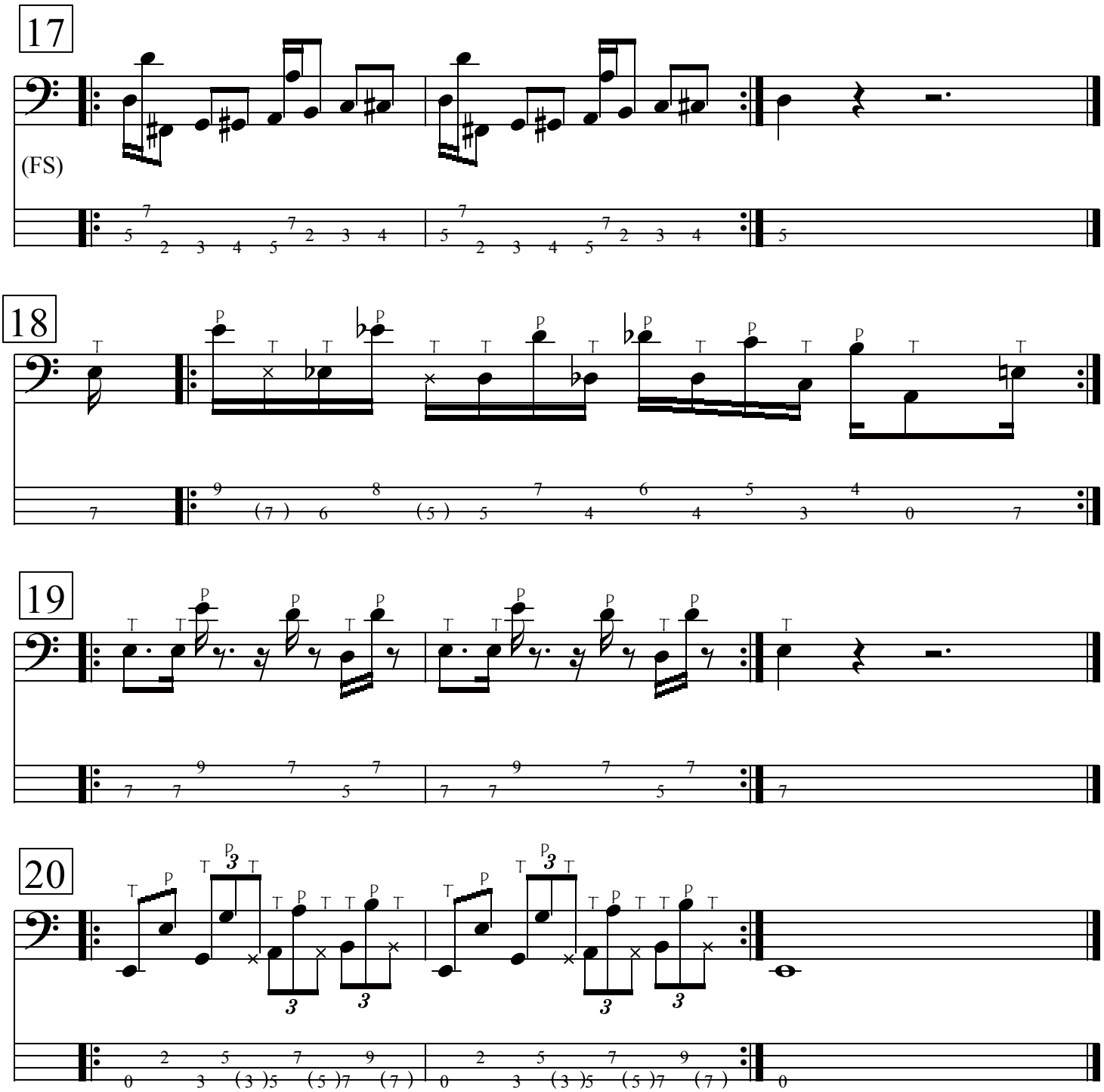
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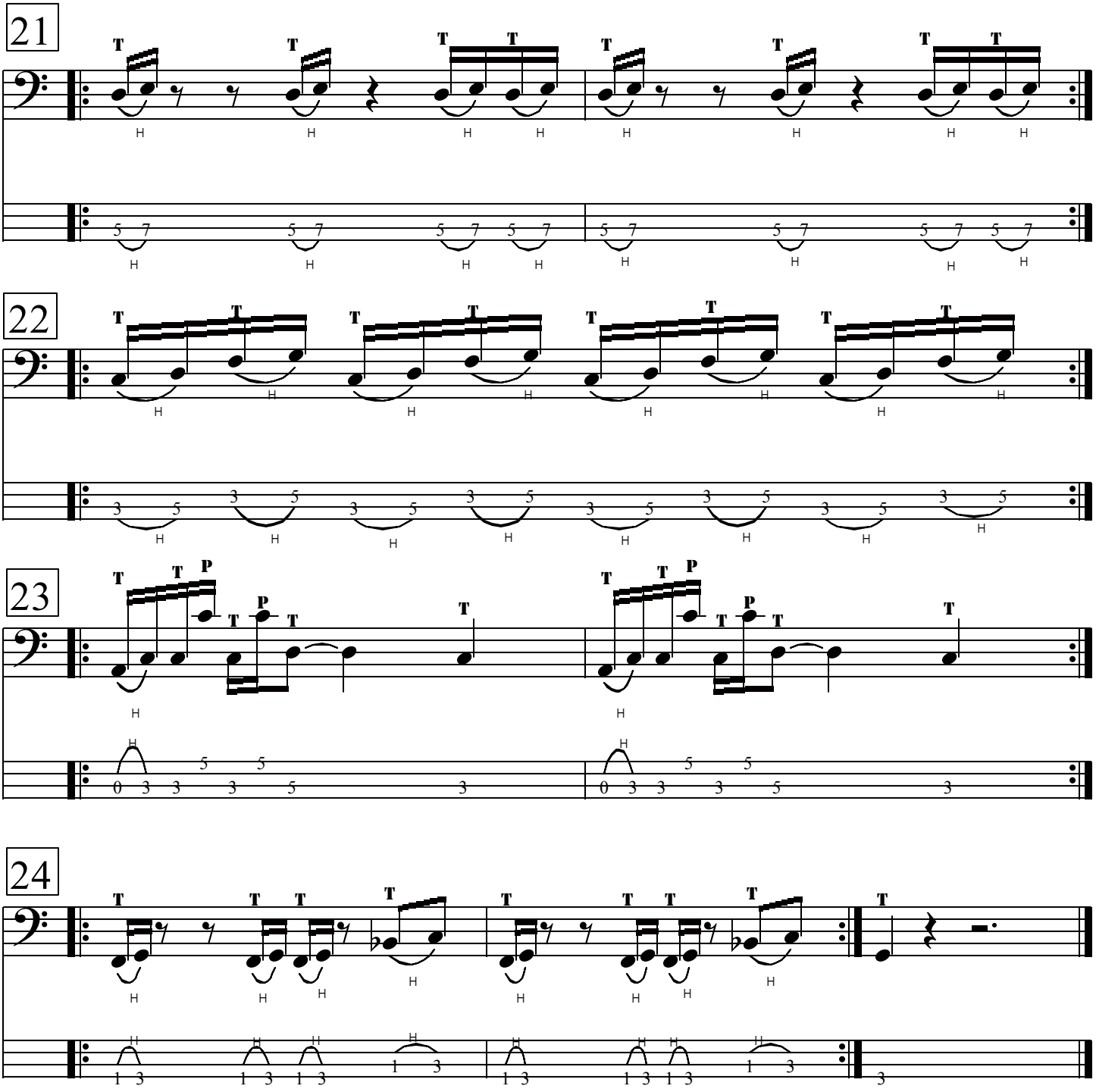

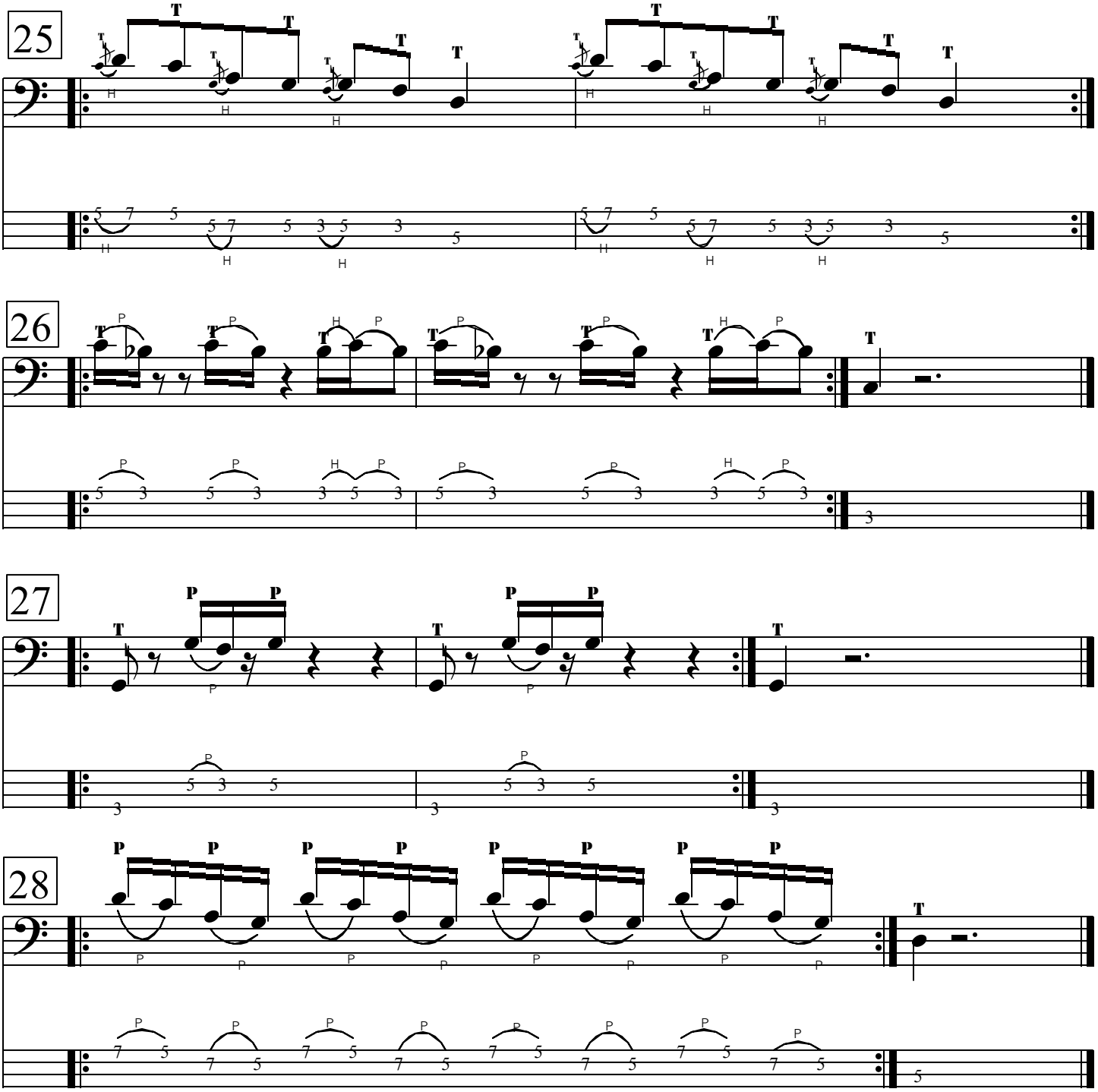
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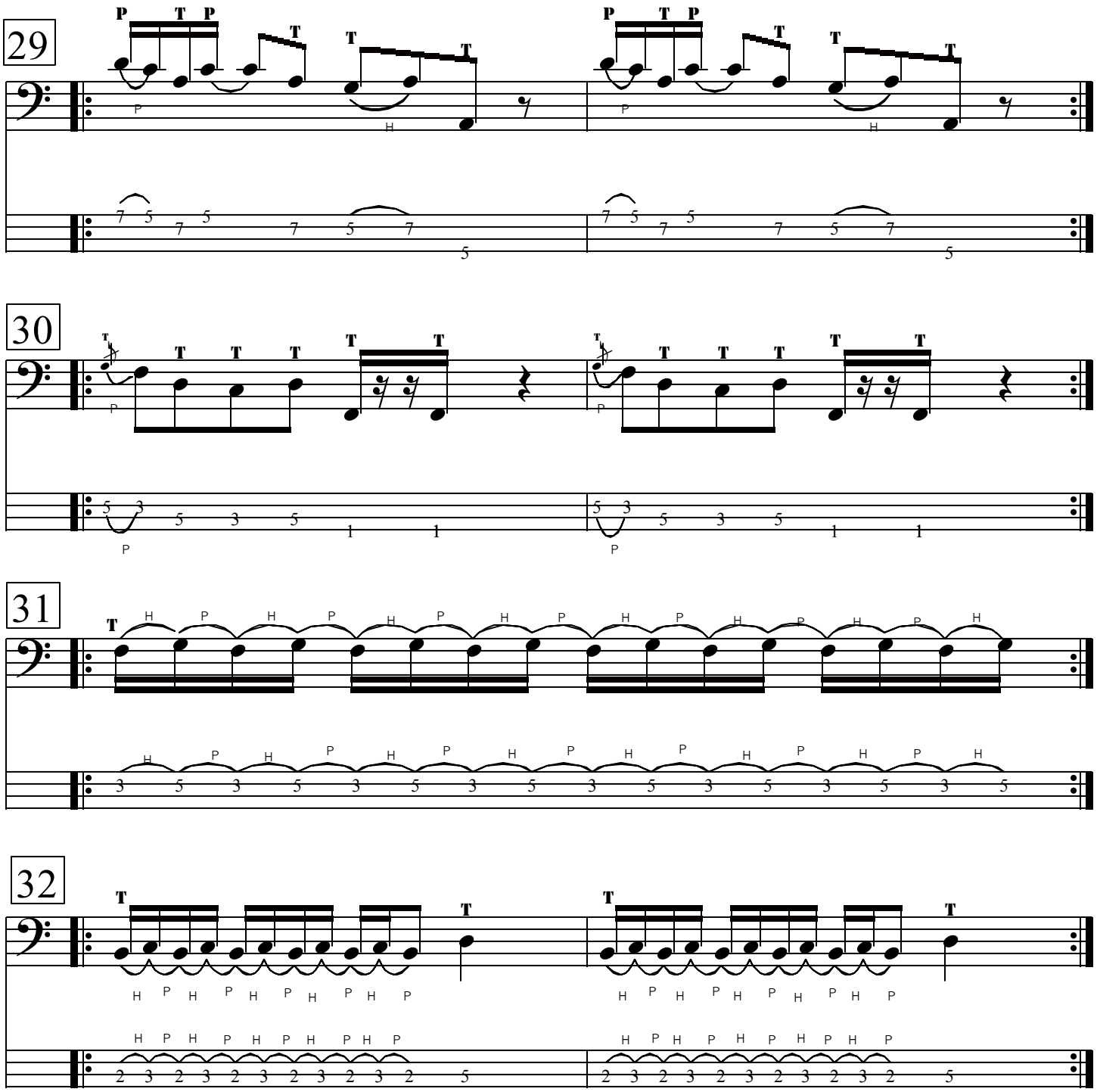
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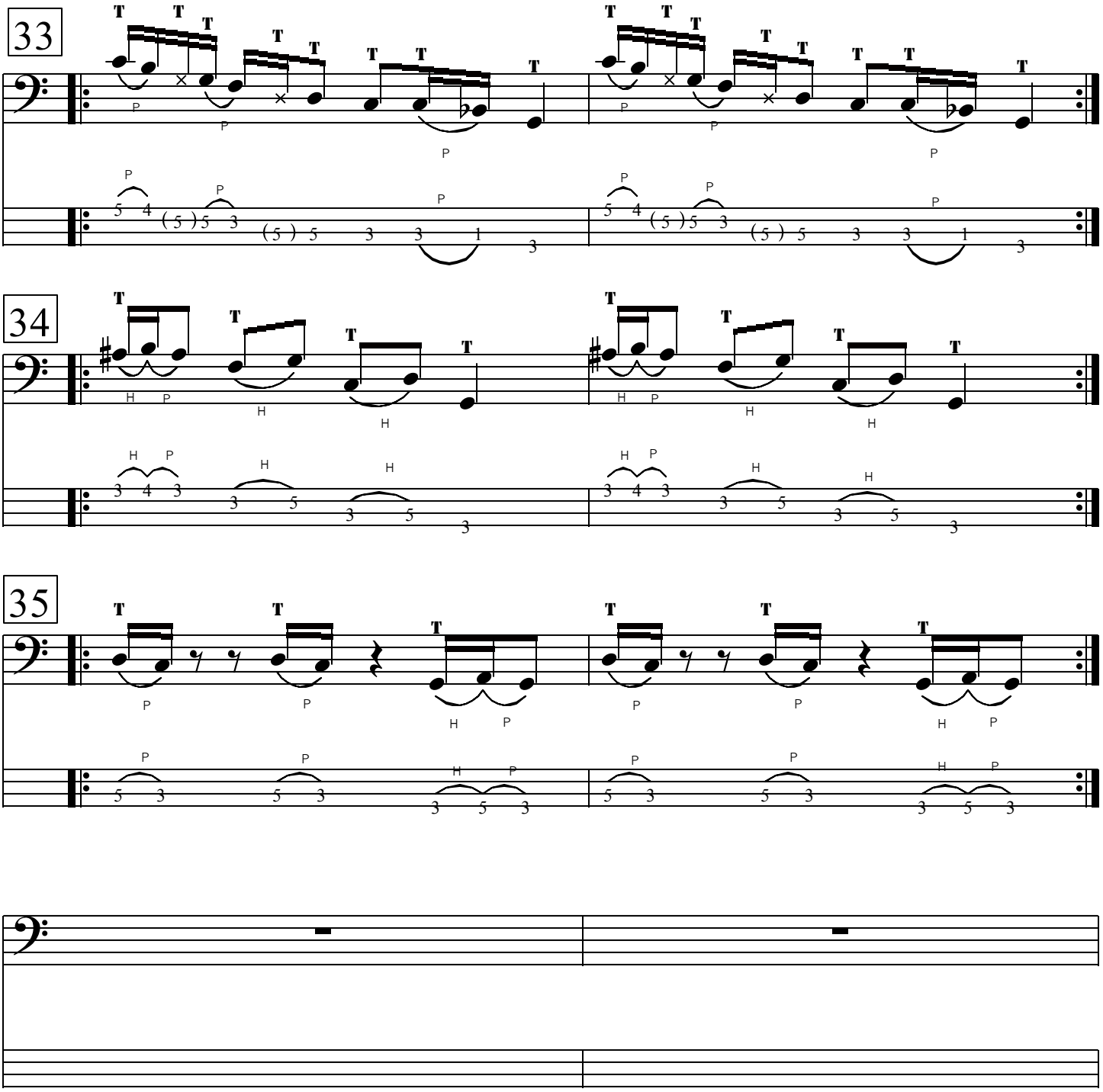
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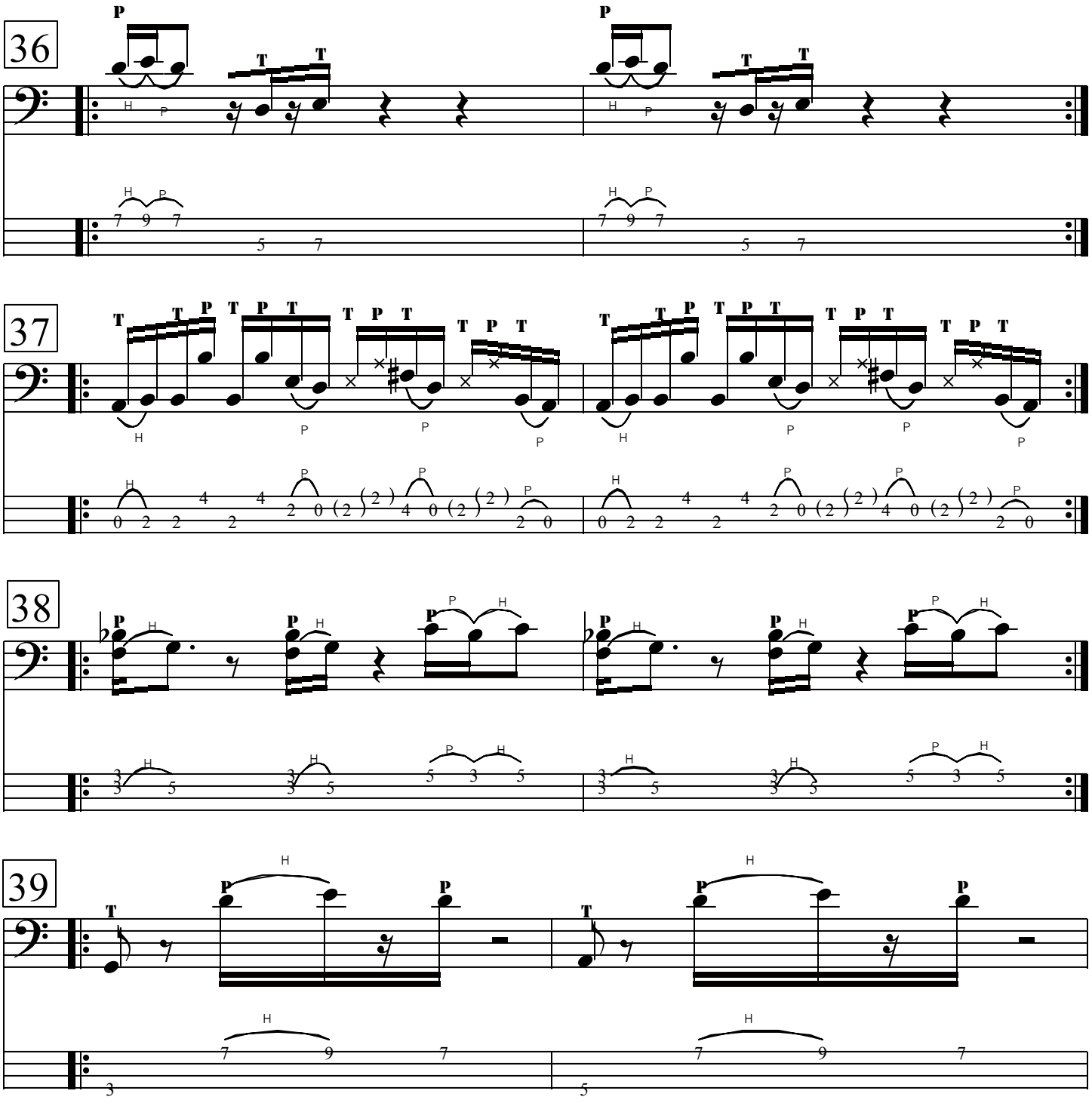
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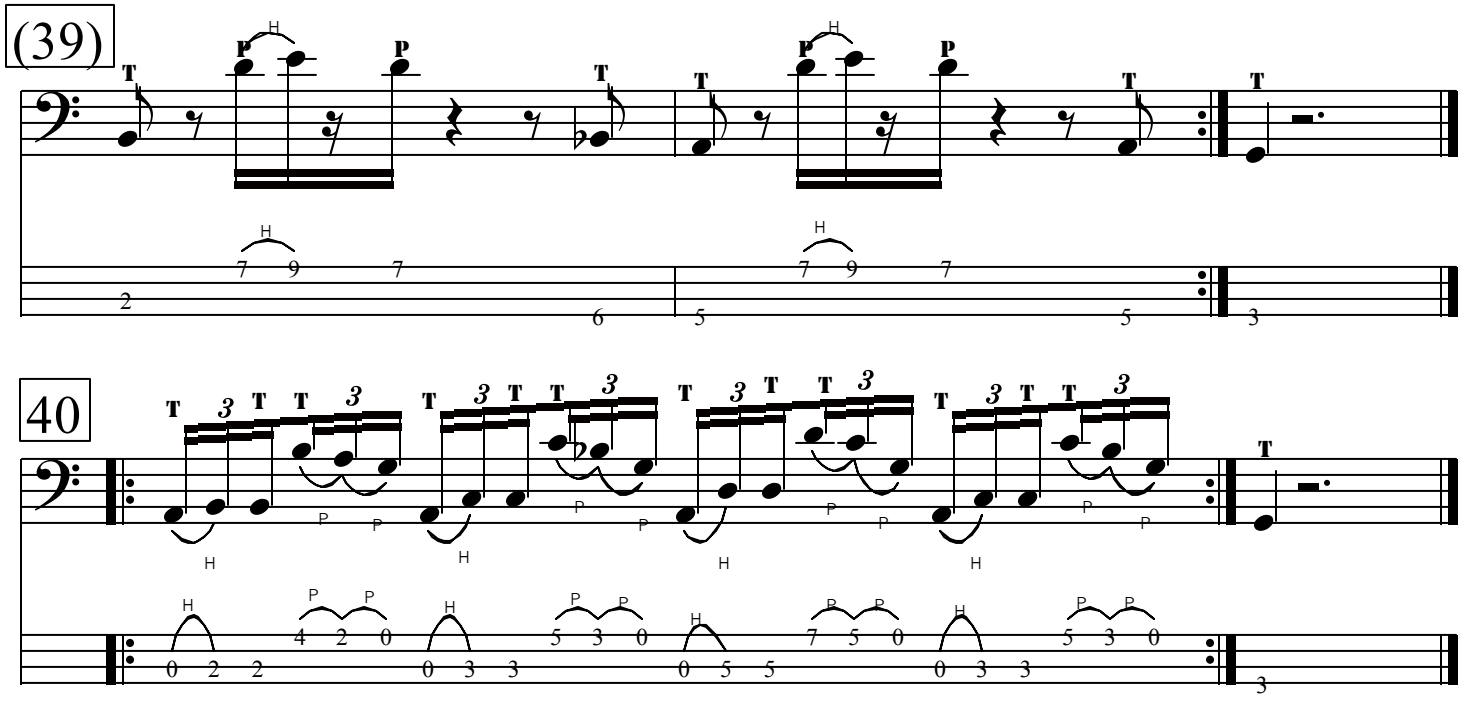
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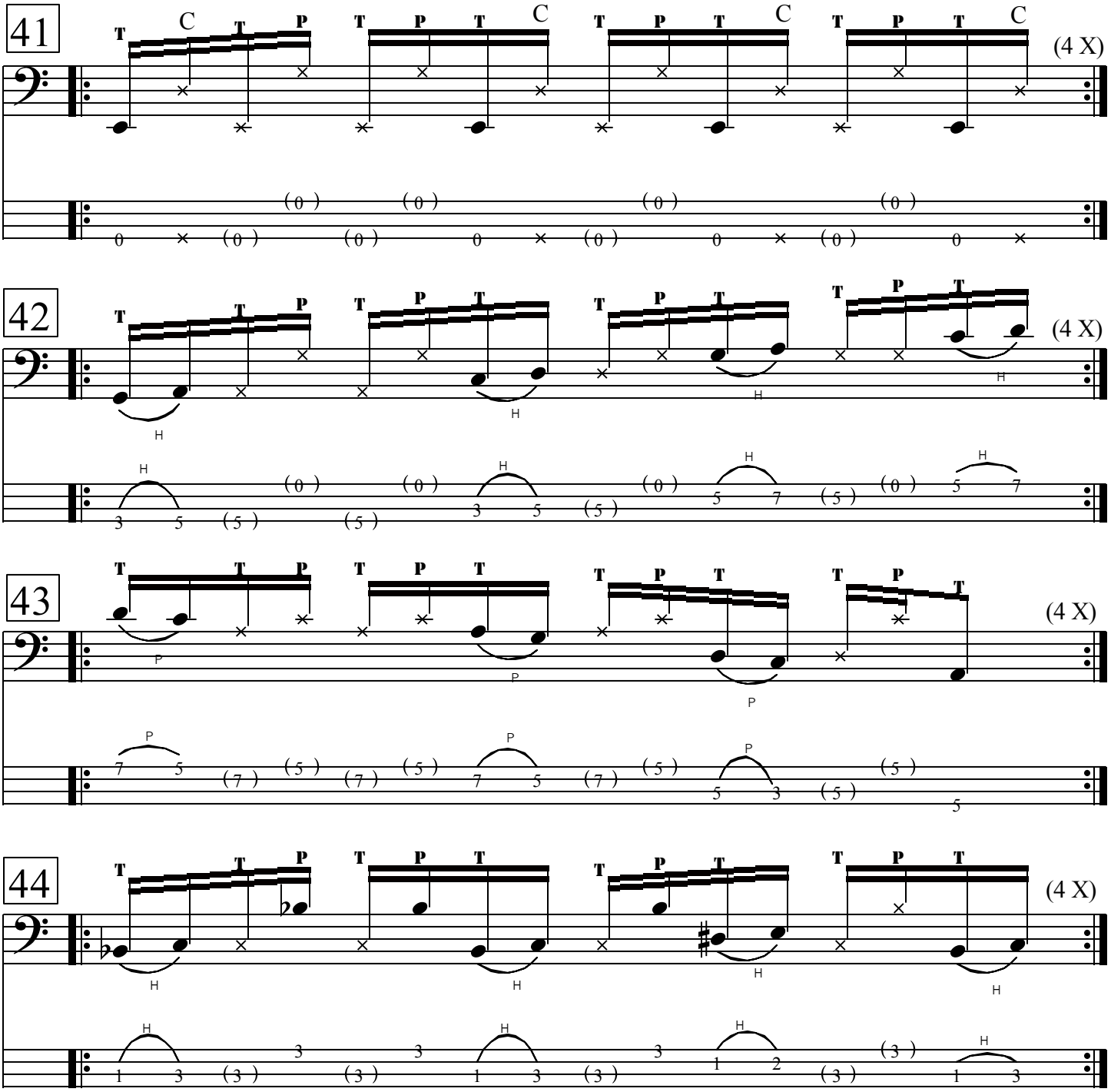
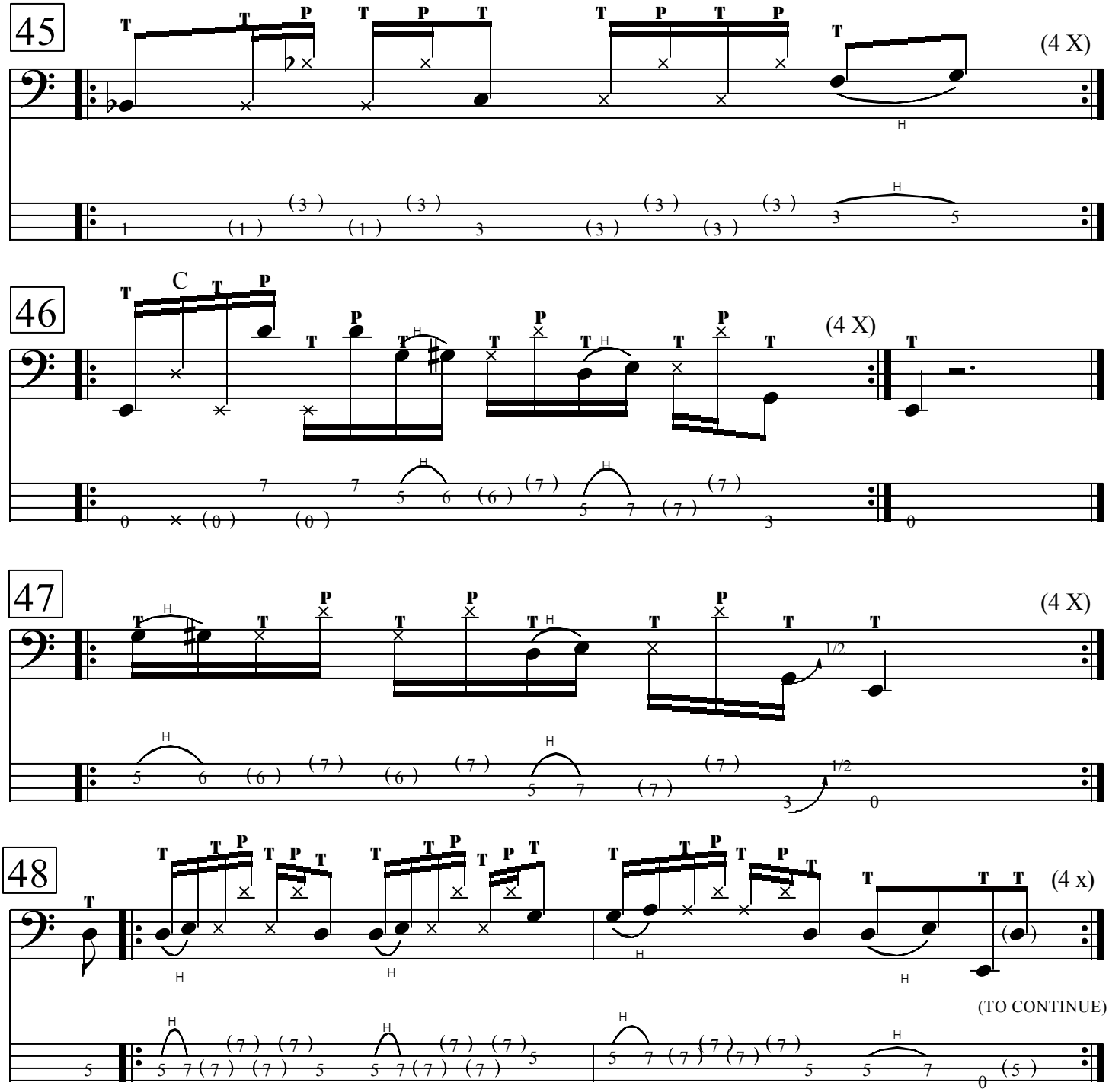
Rhythm Patterns

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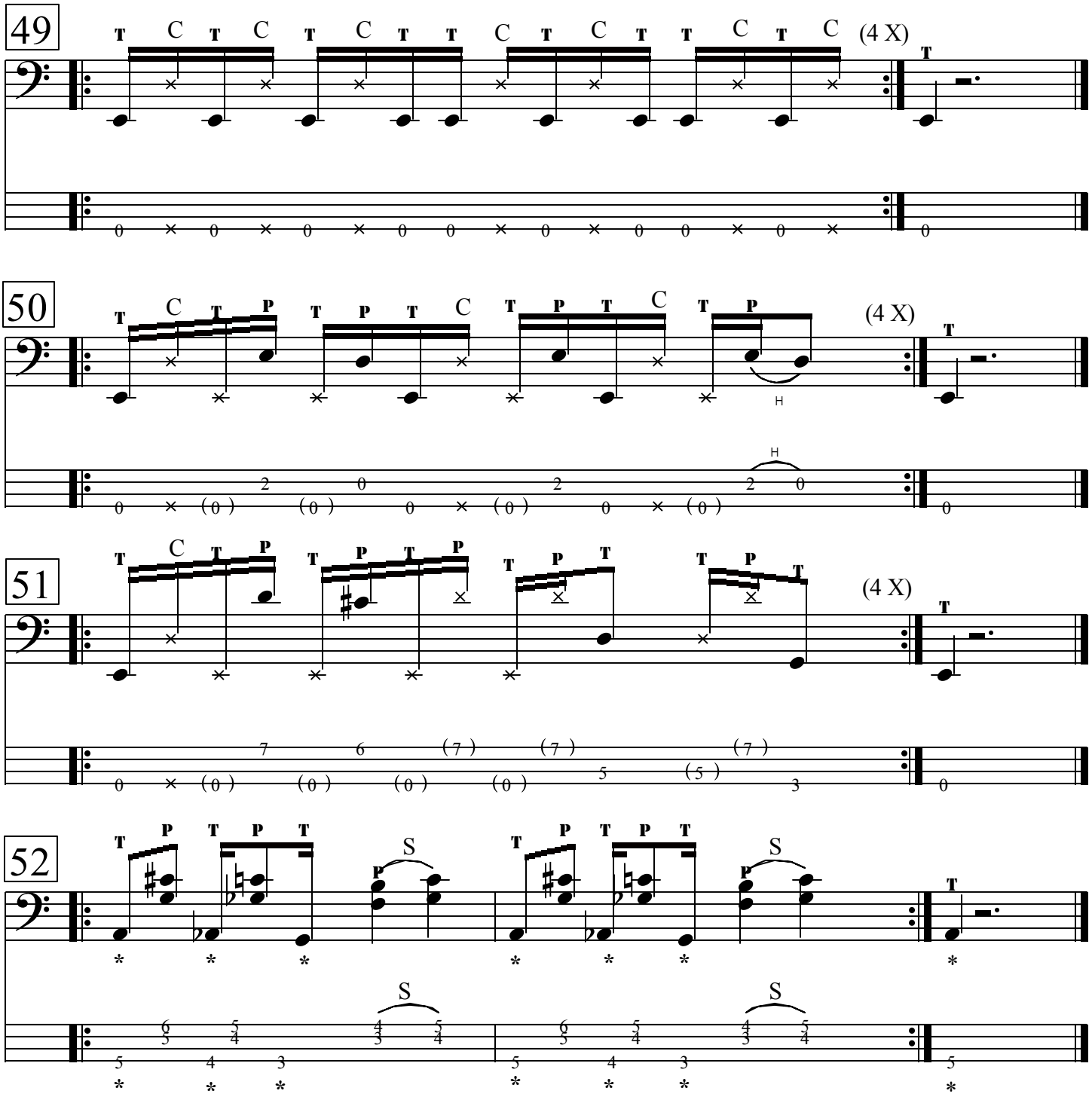
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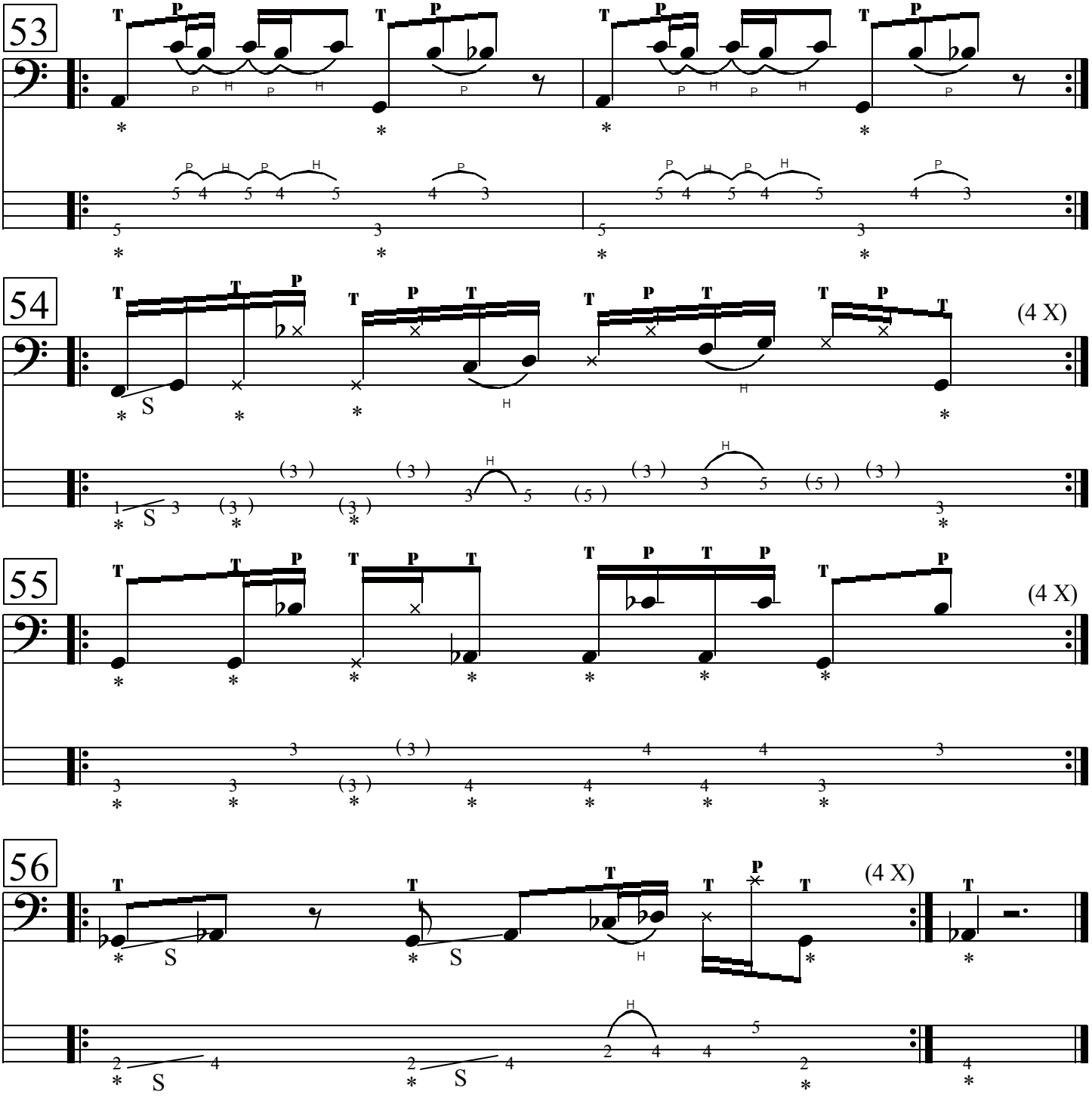
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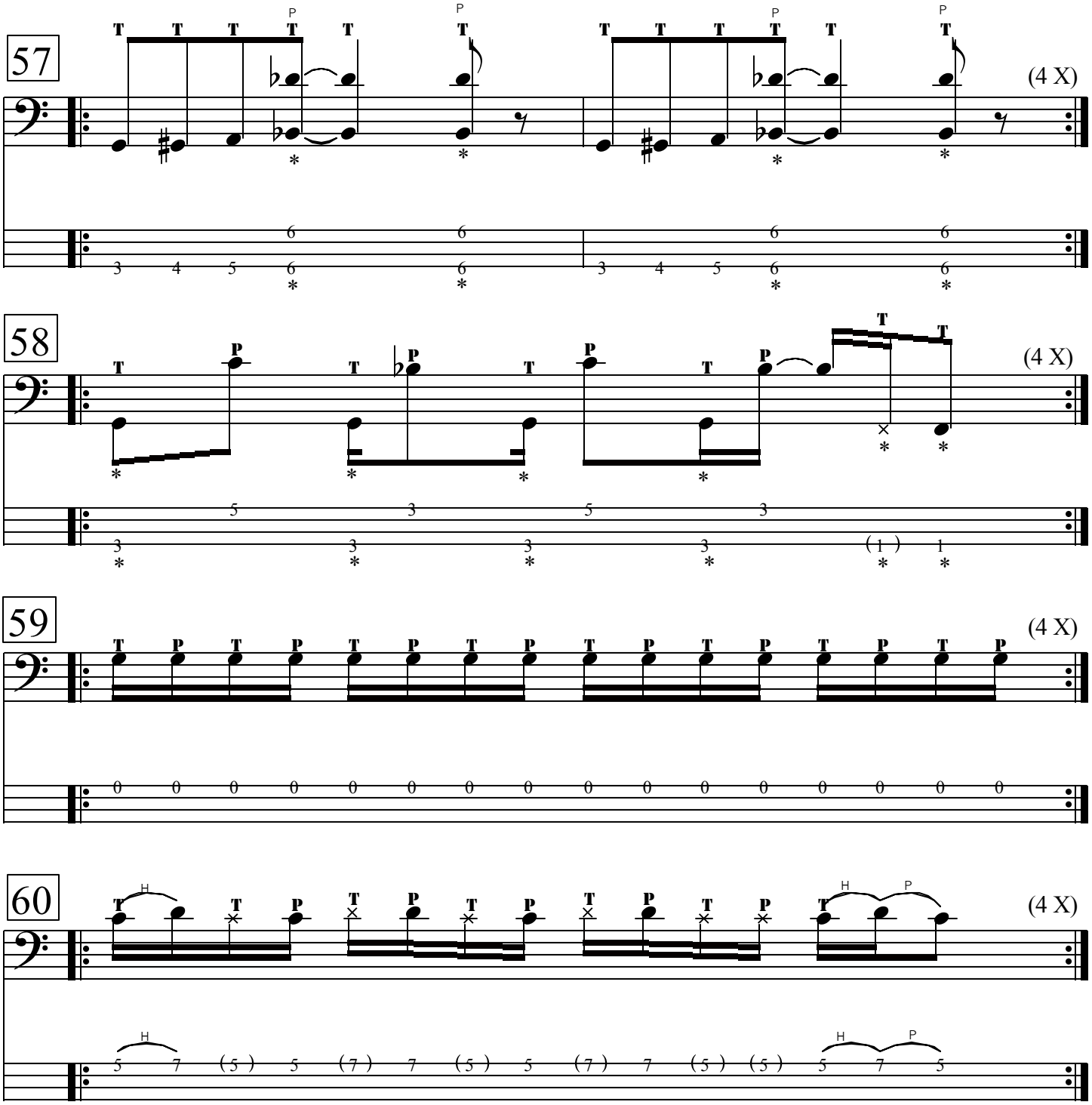
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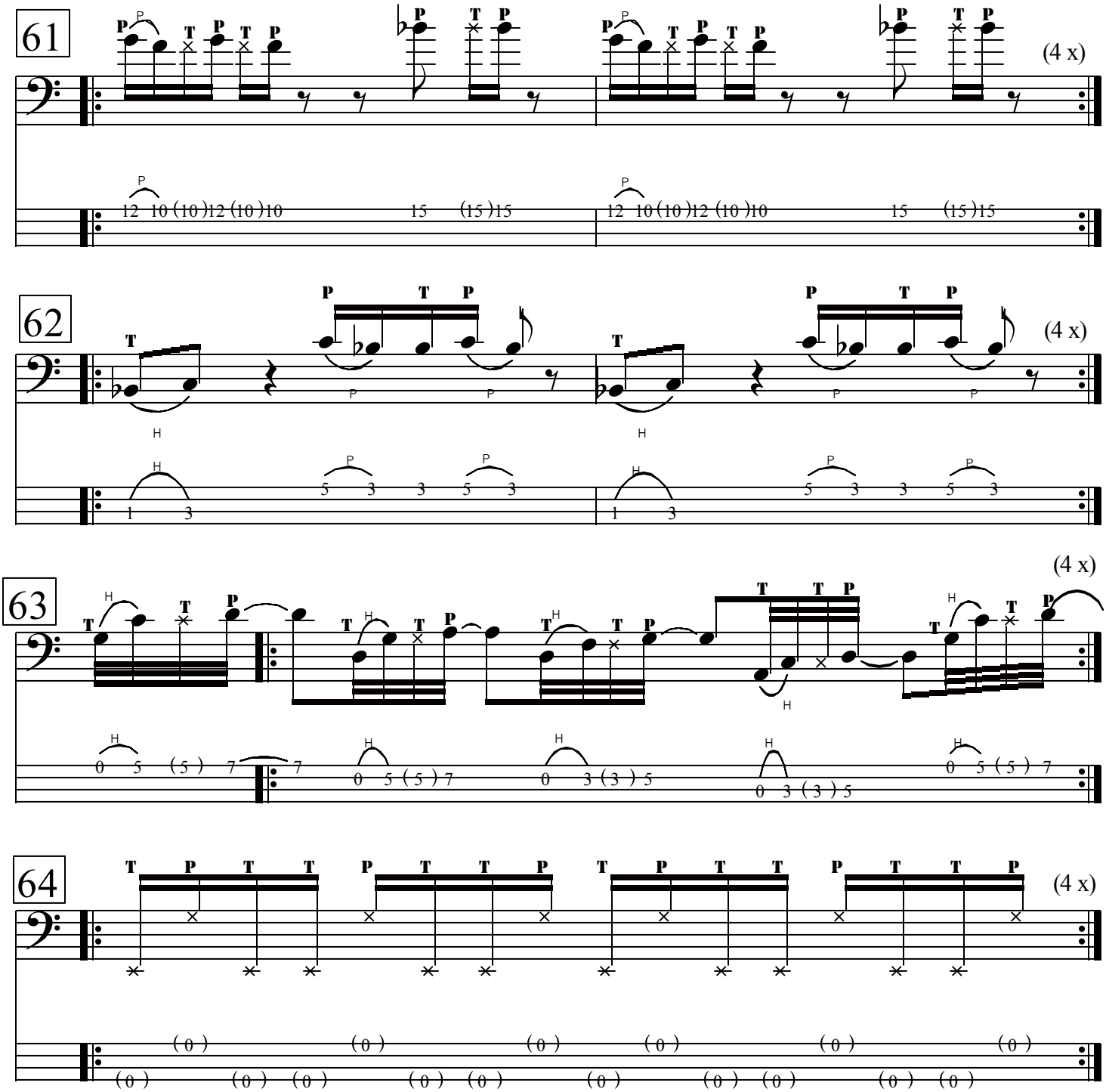
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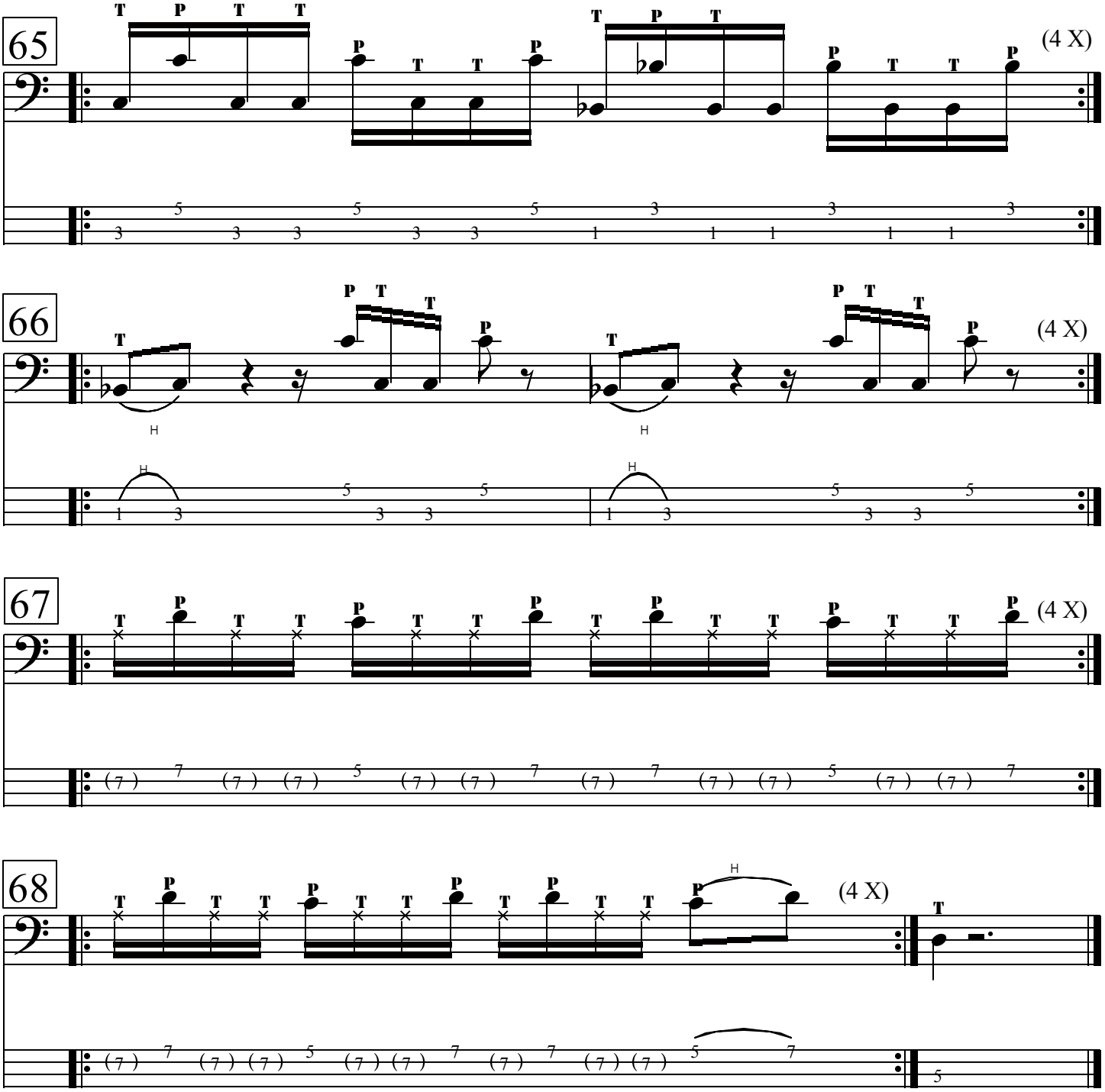
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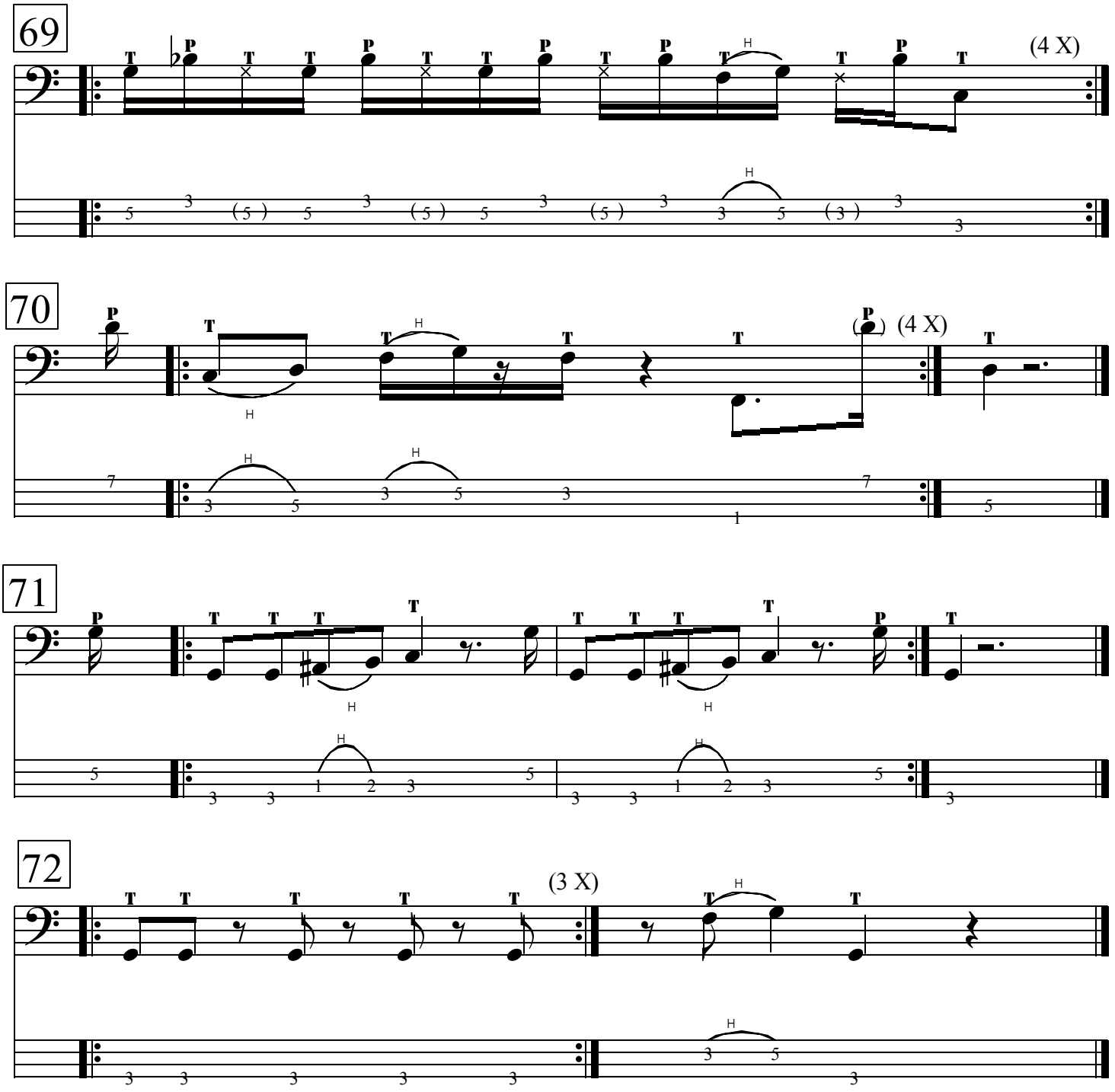
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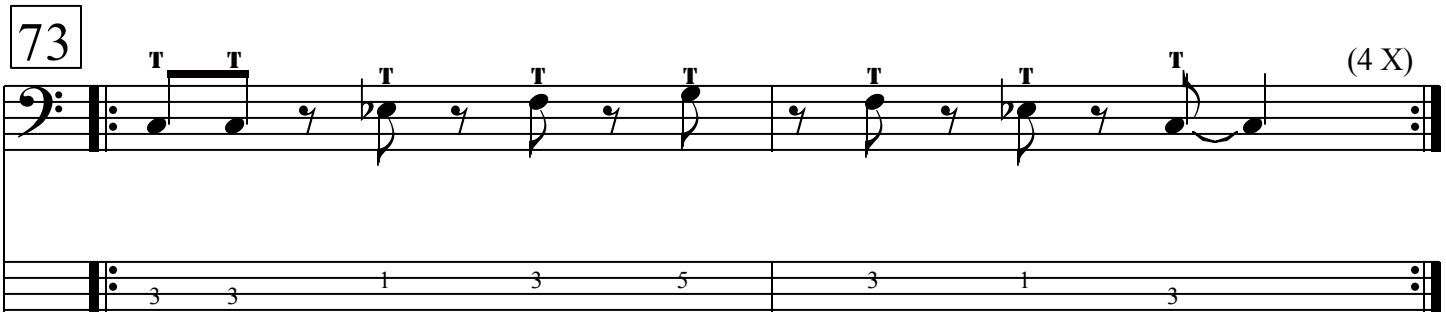
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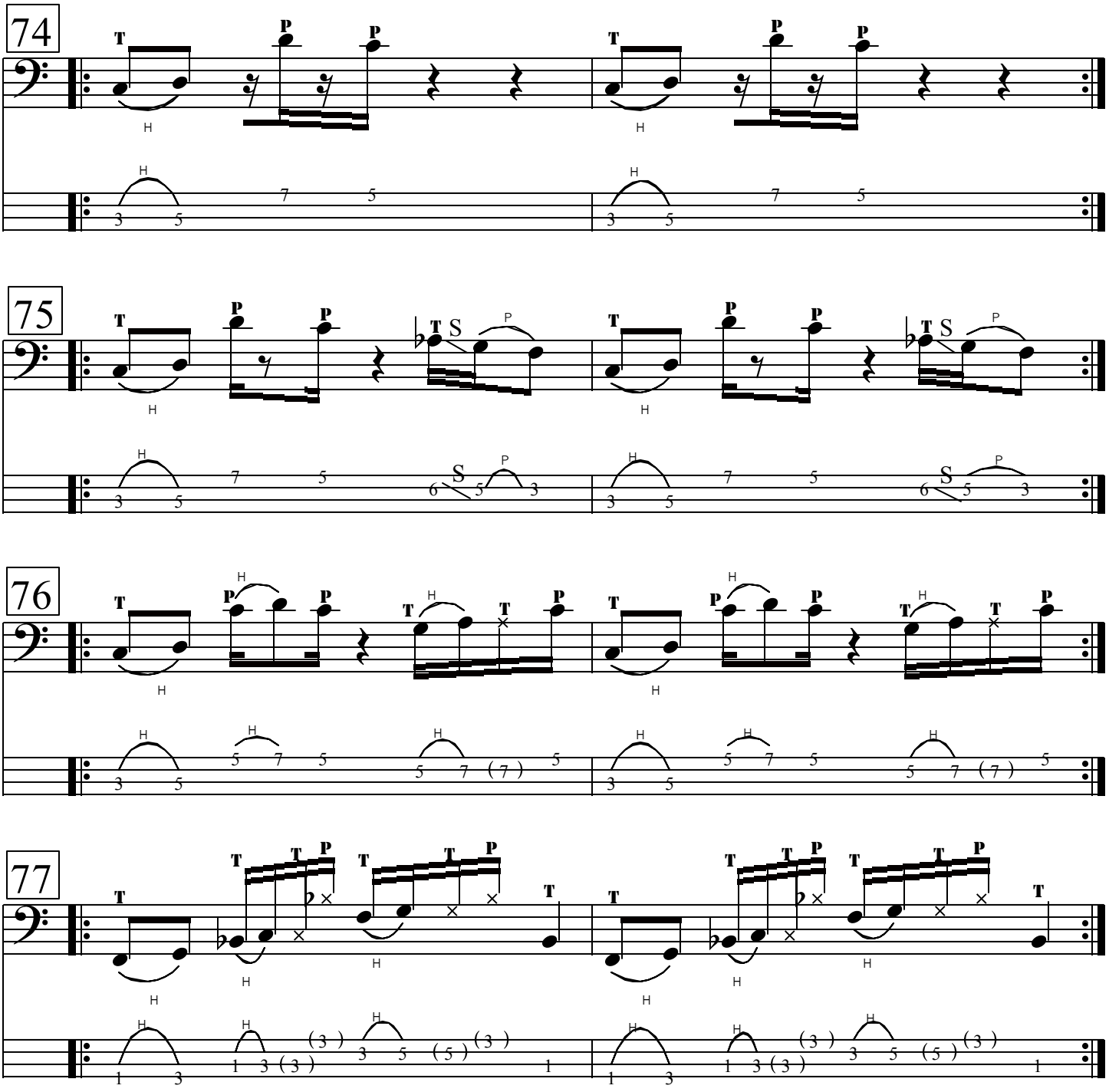
Pentatonic Scales



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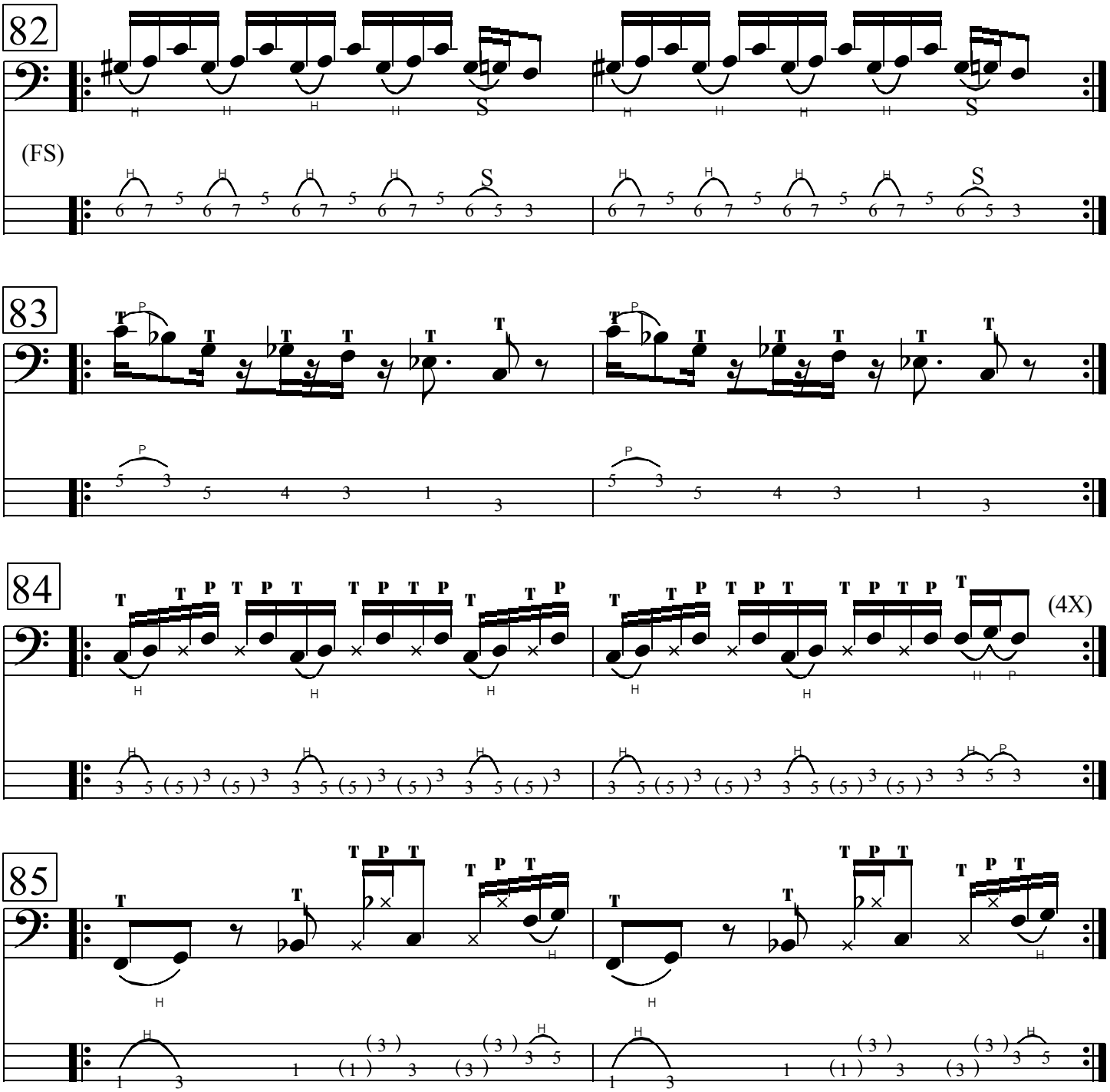
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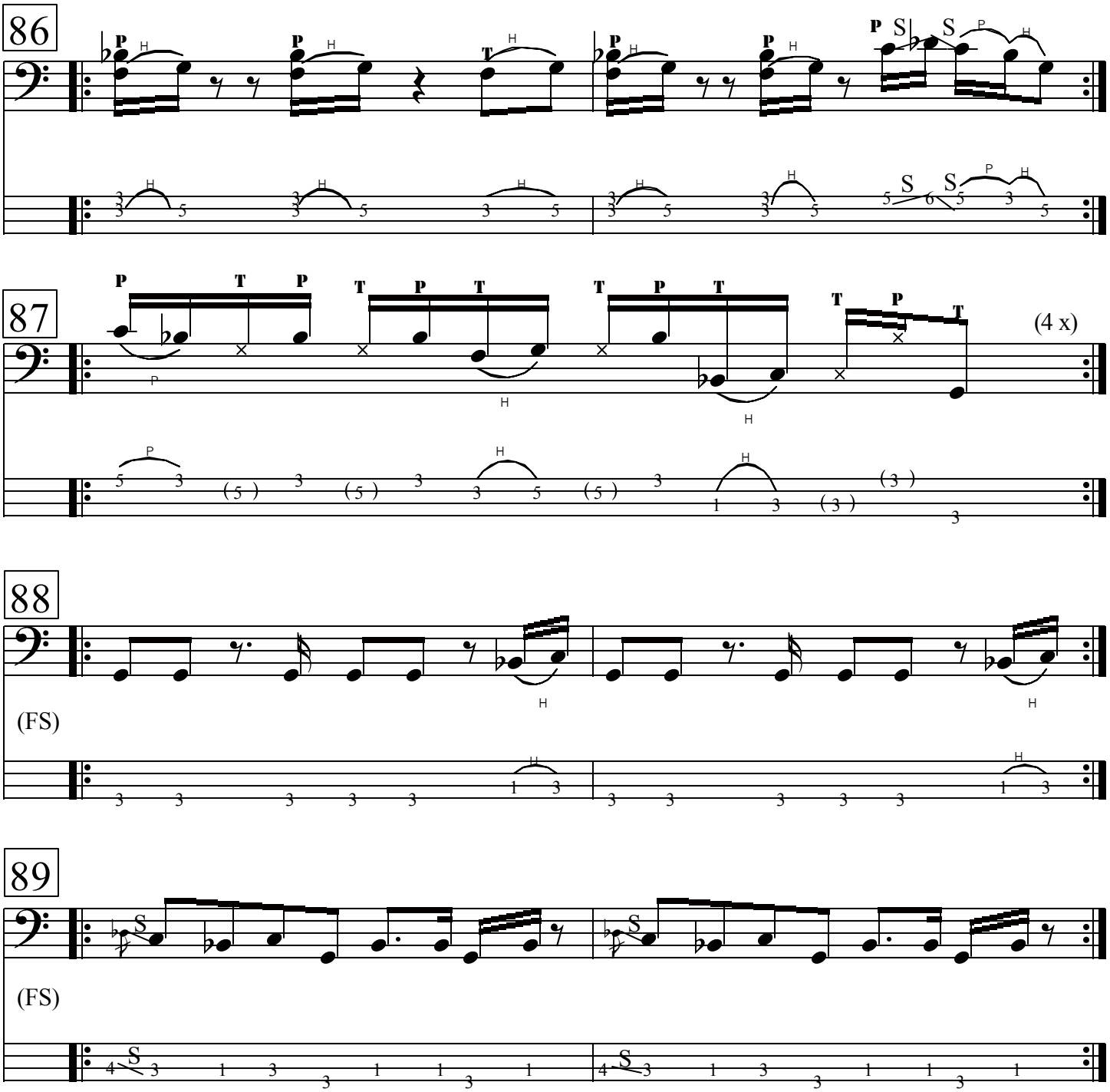
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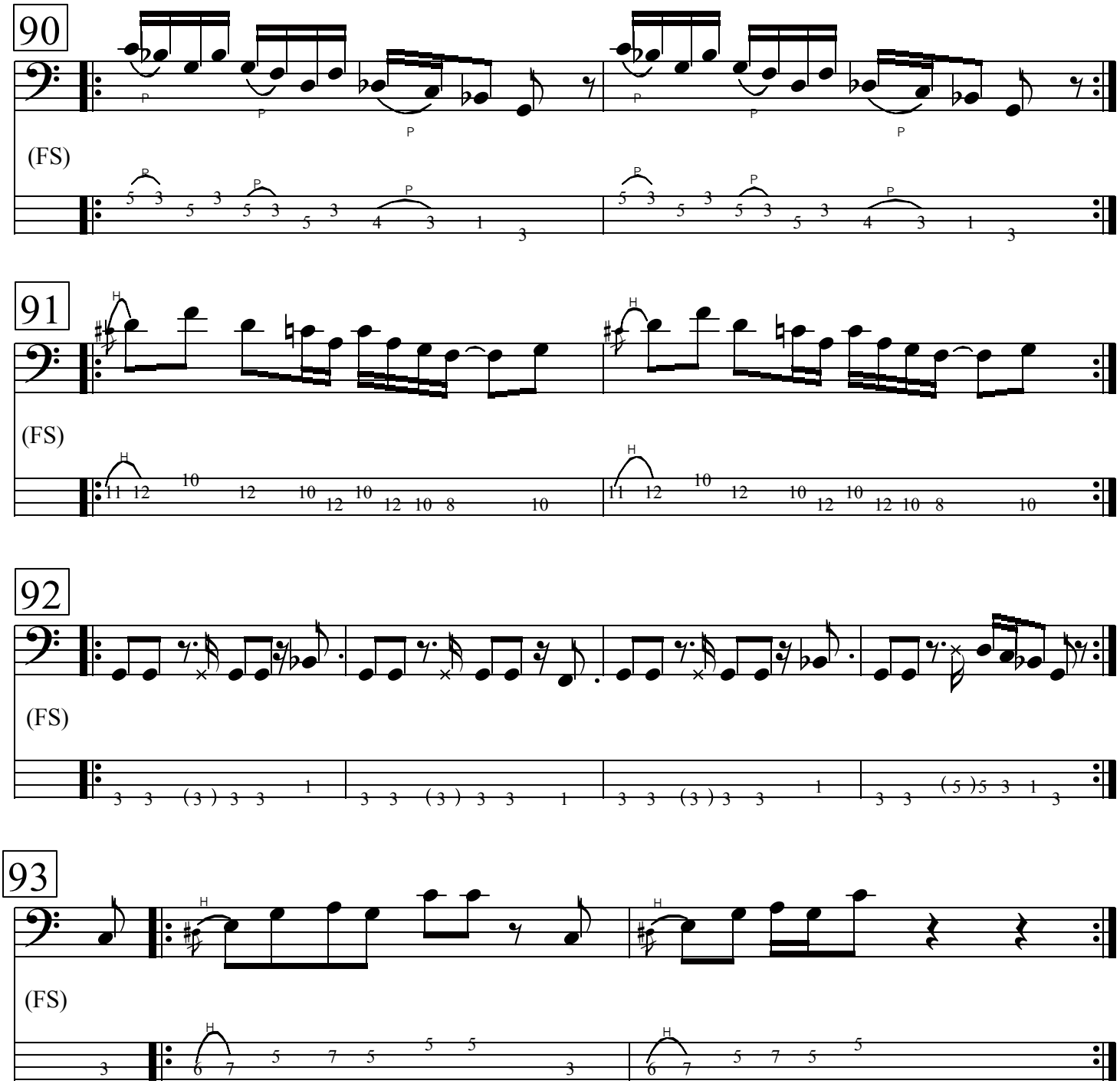
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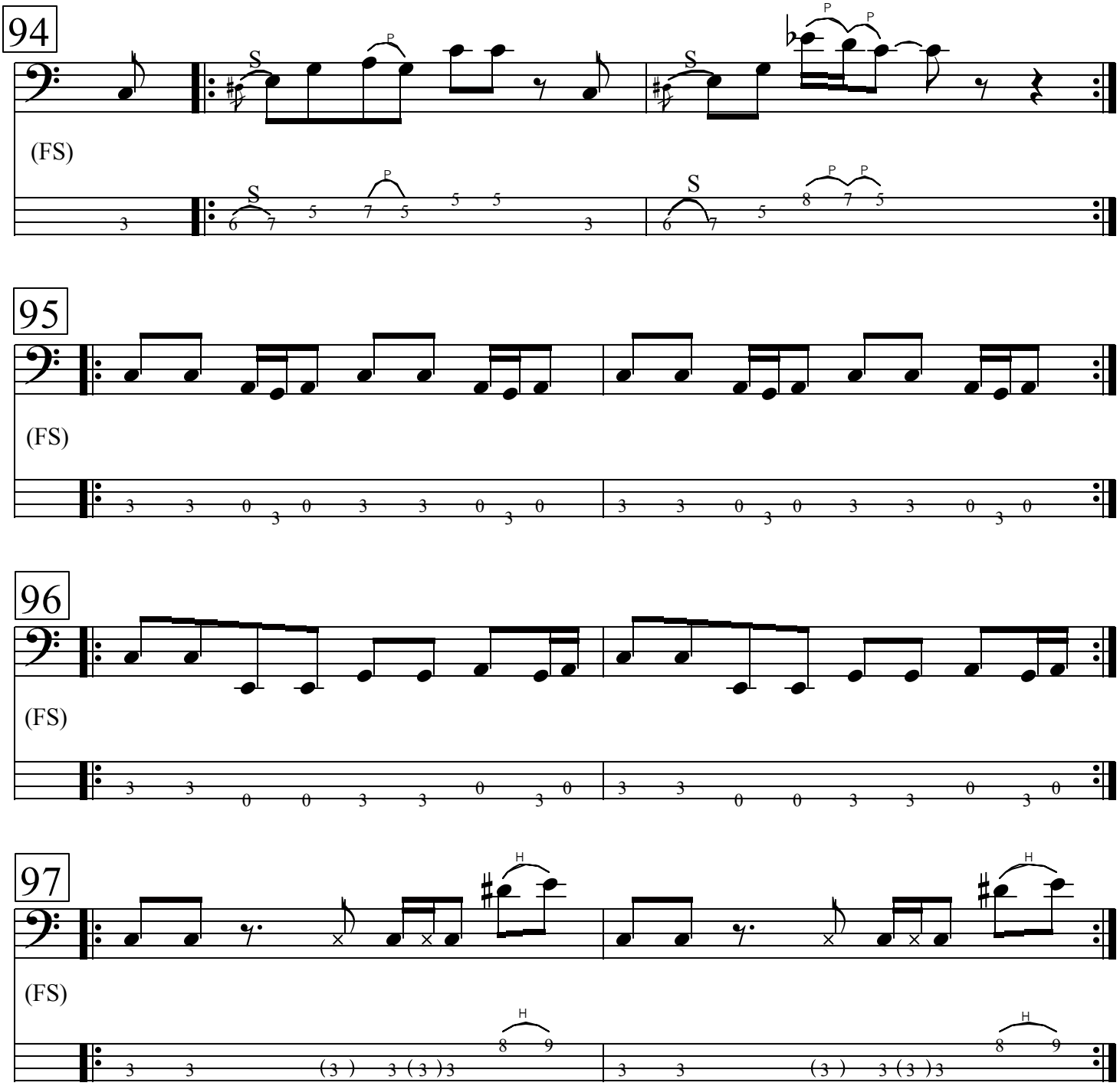
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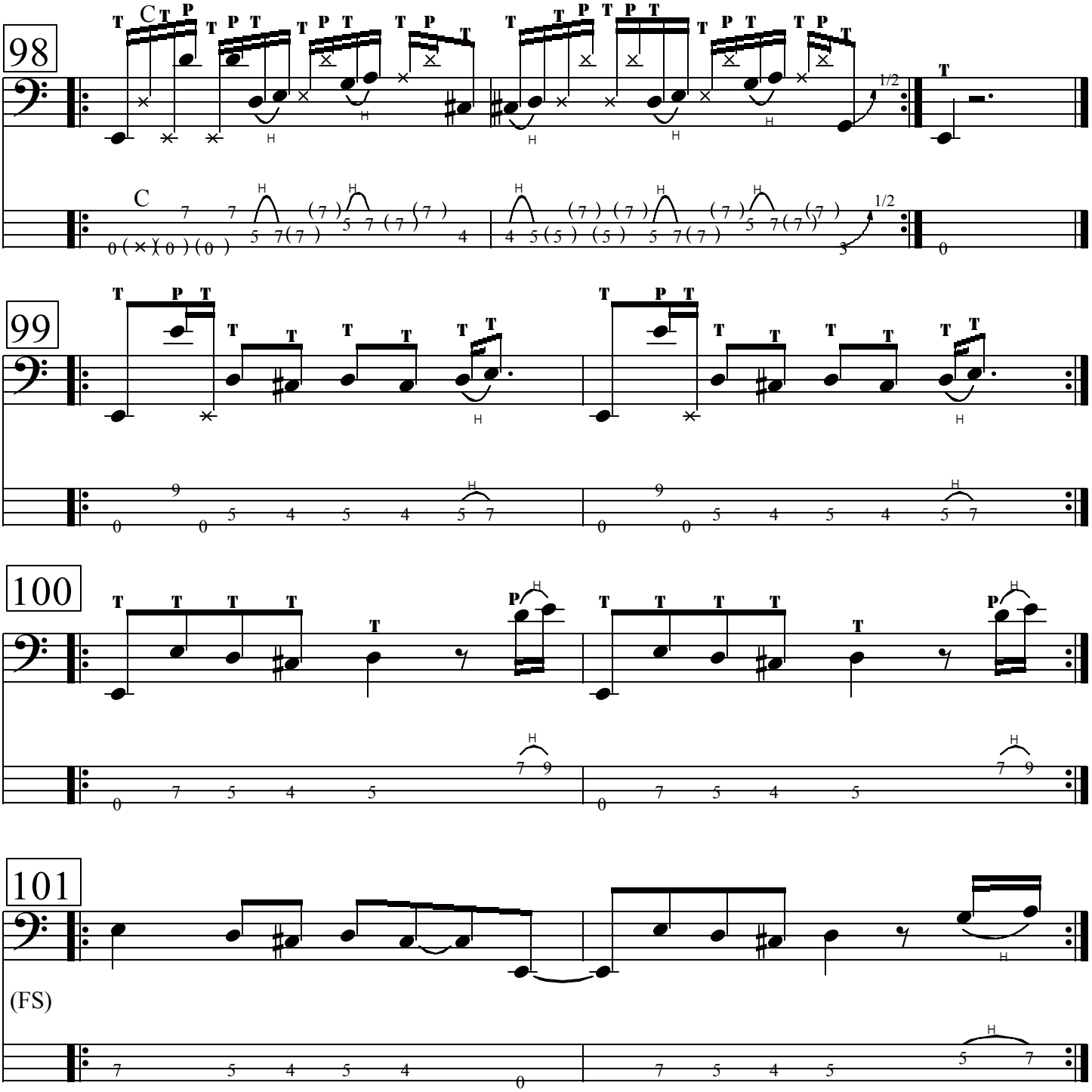

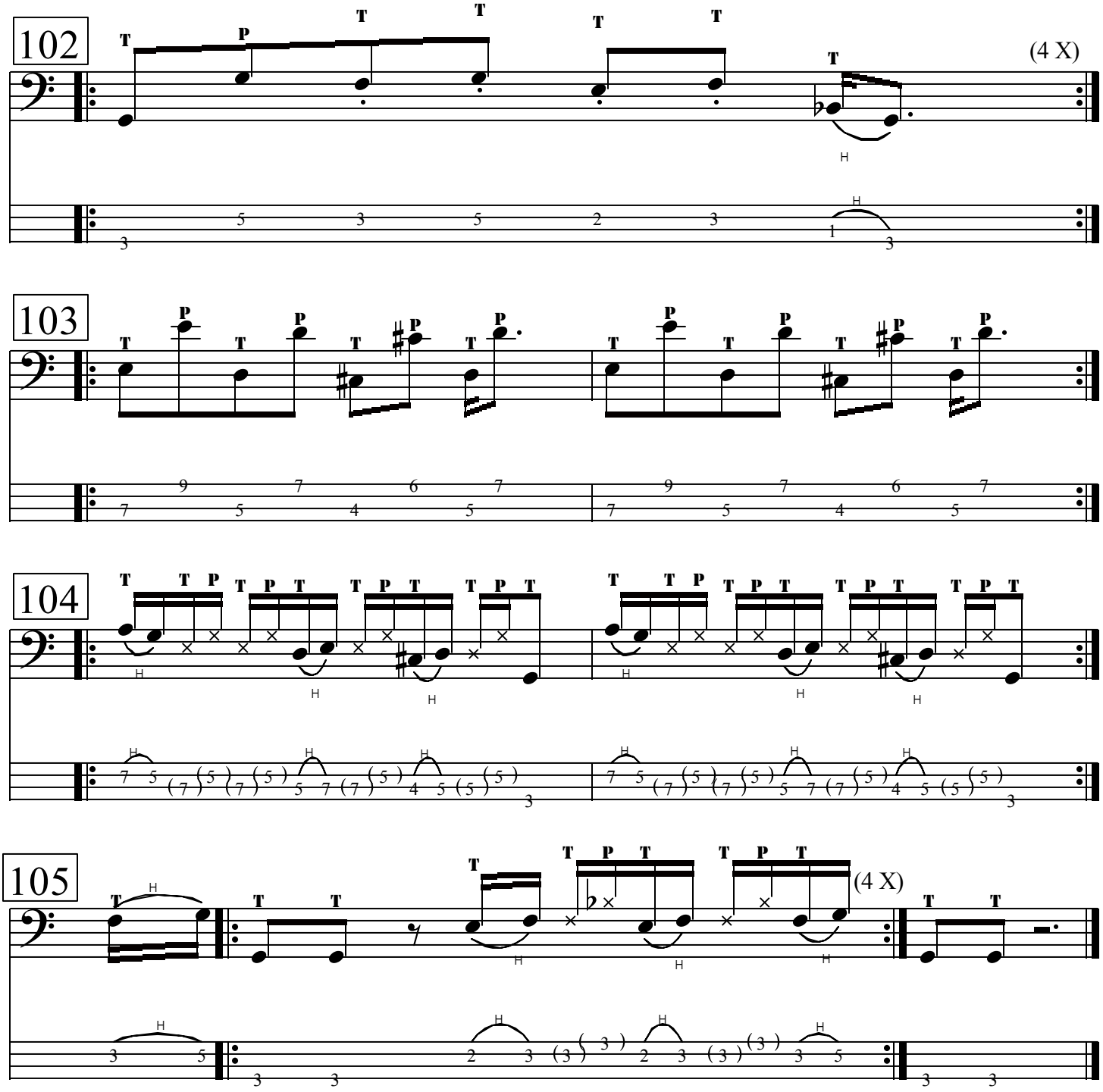
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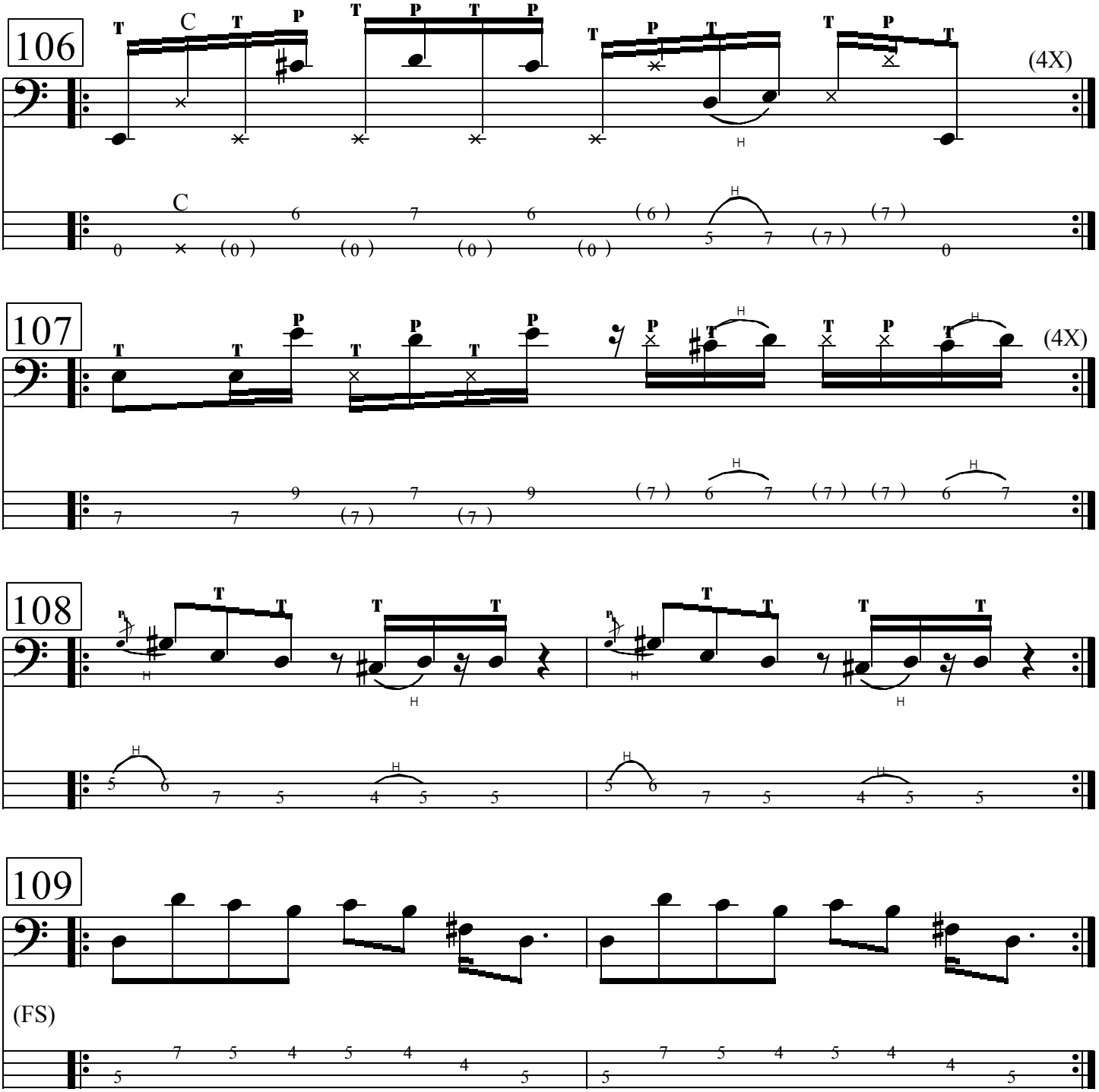
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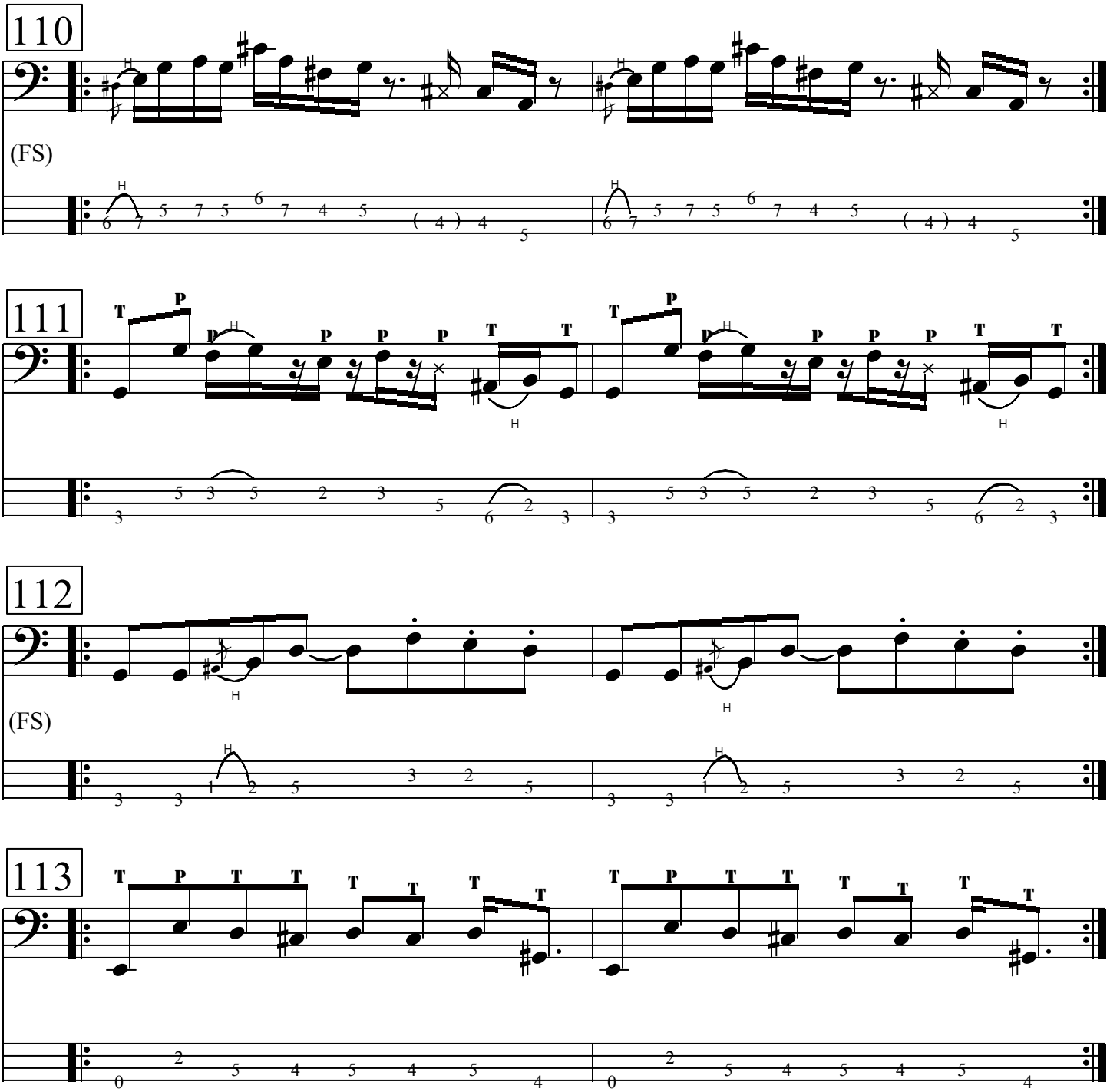
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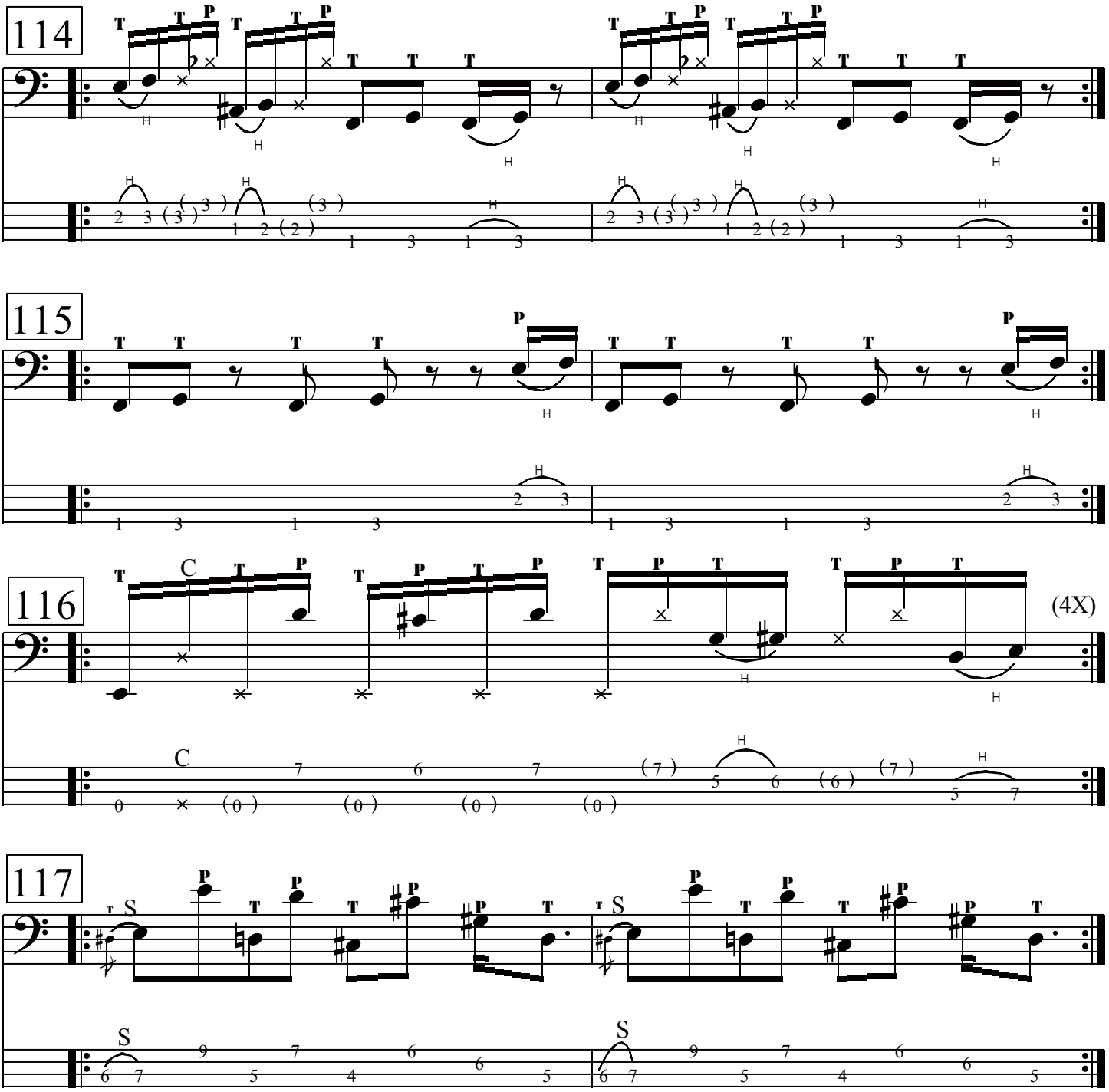
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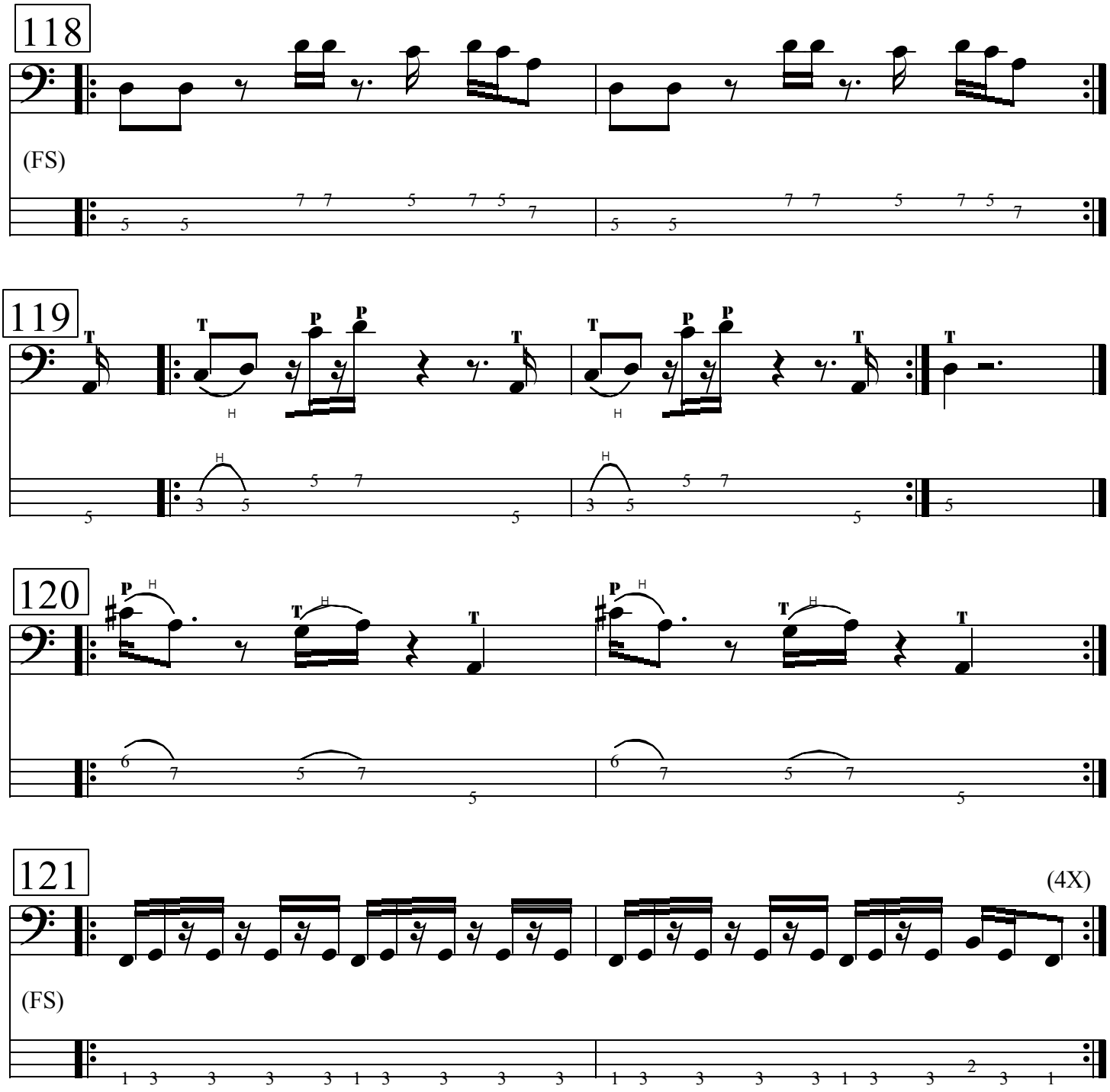
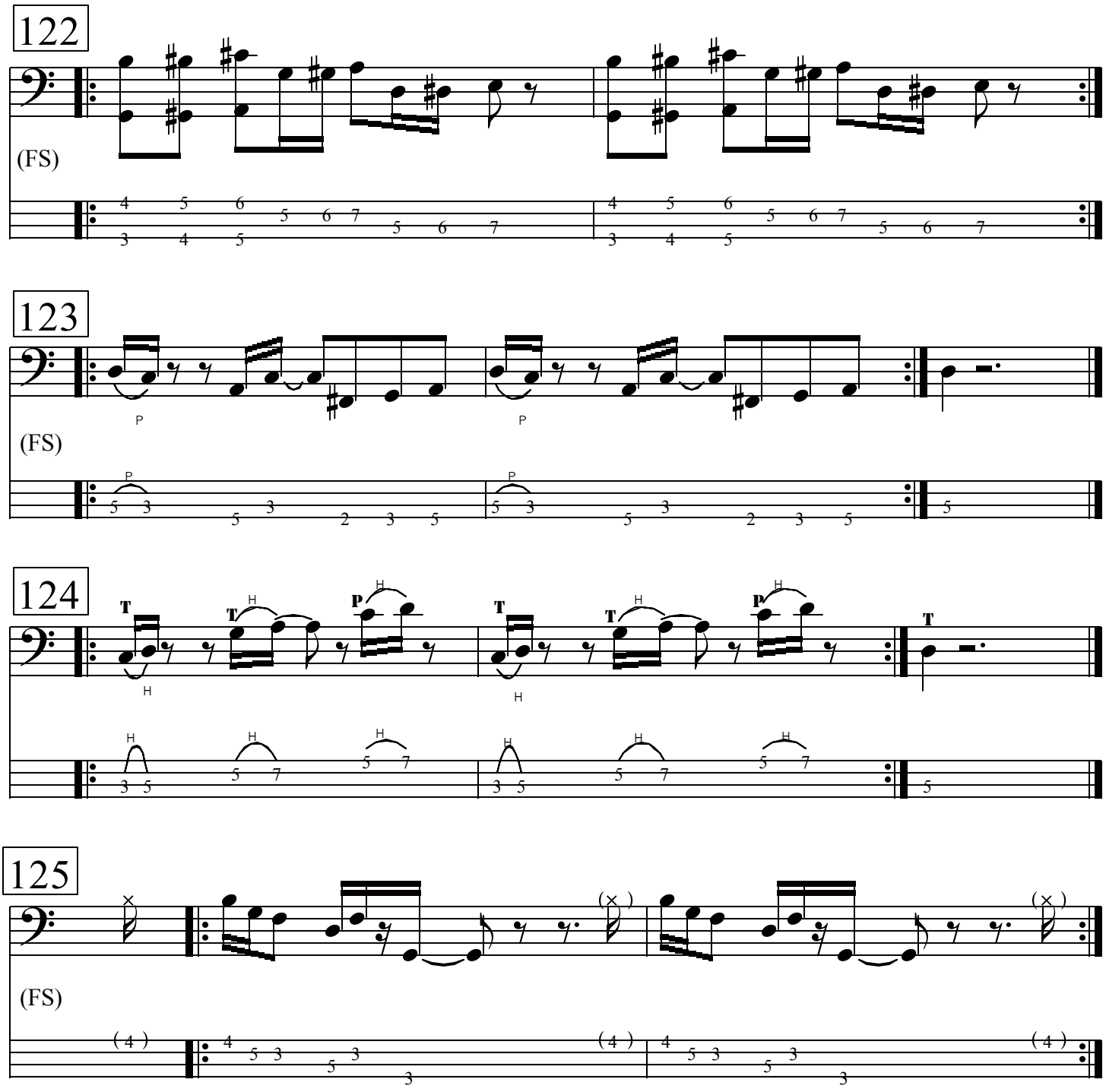
Dominant 7ths

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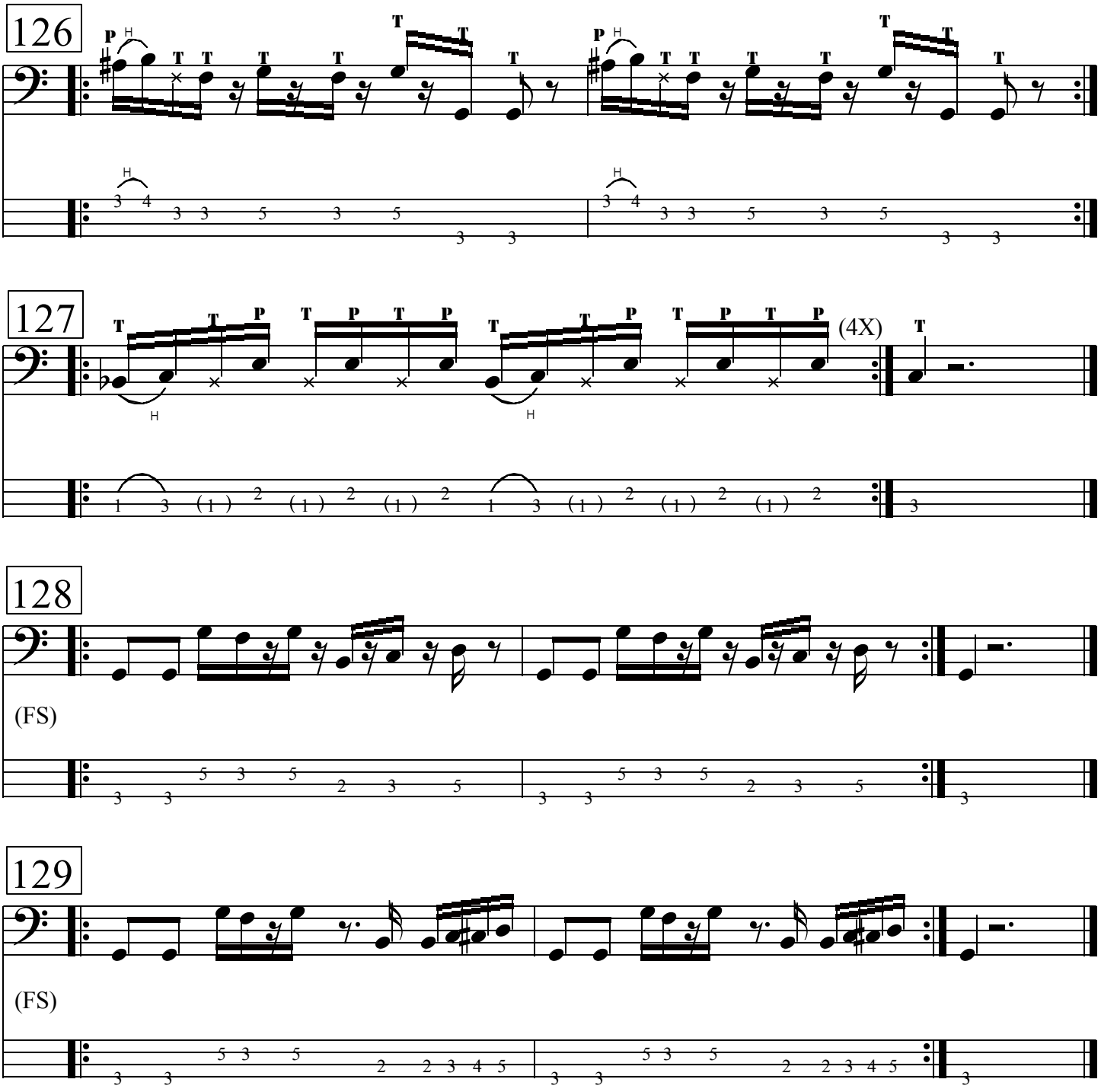
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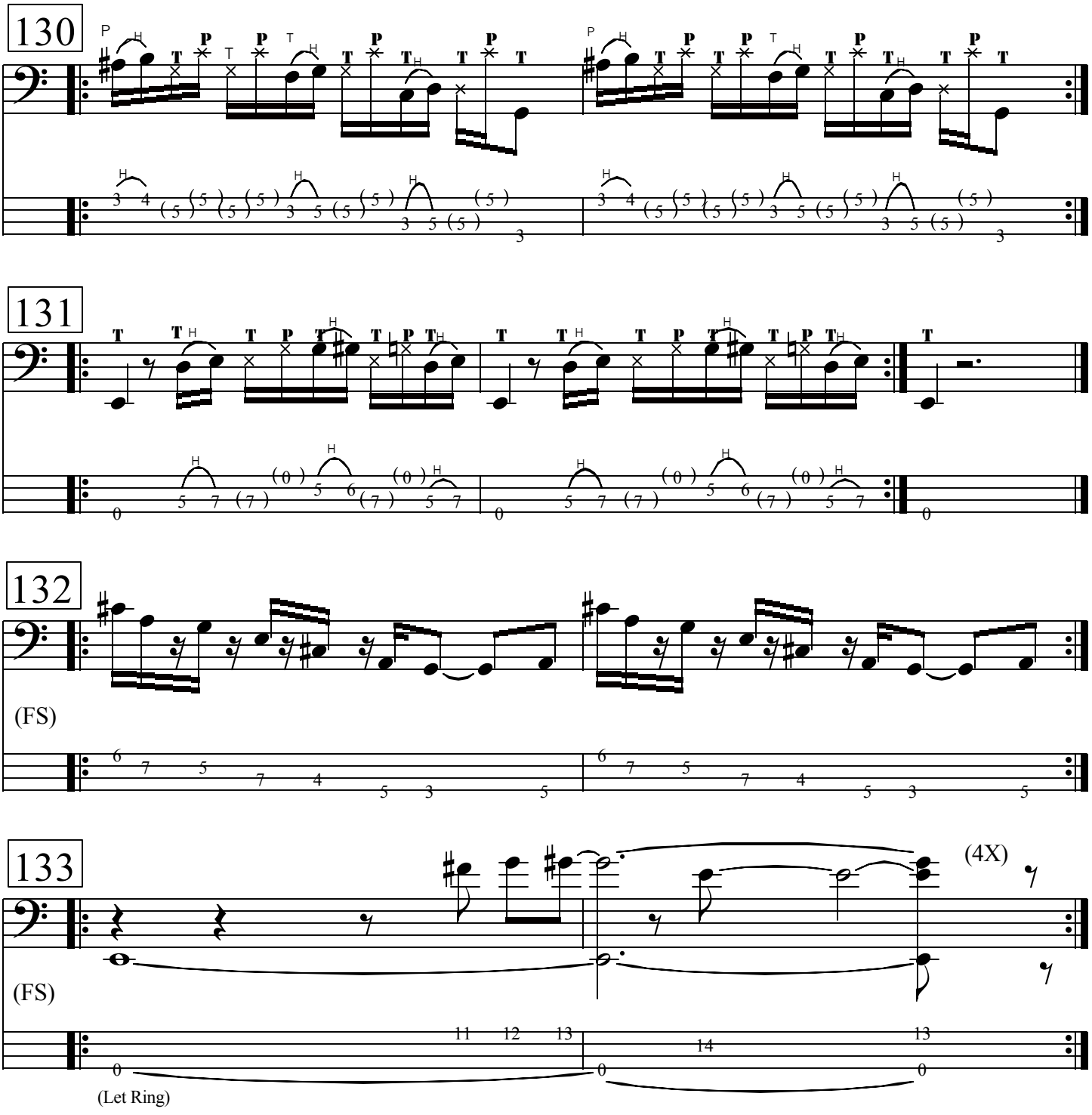
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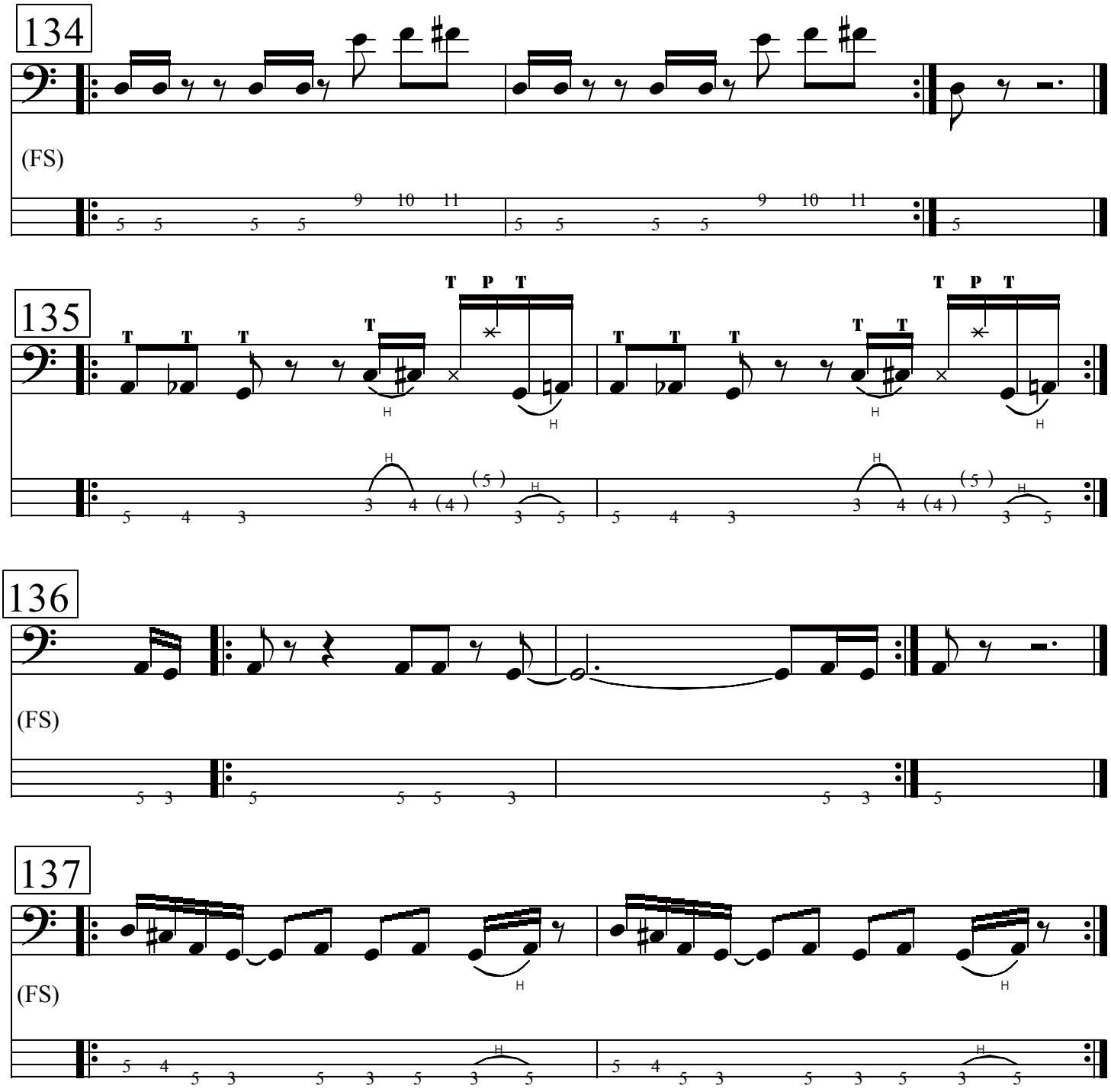
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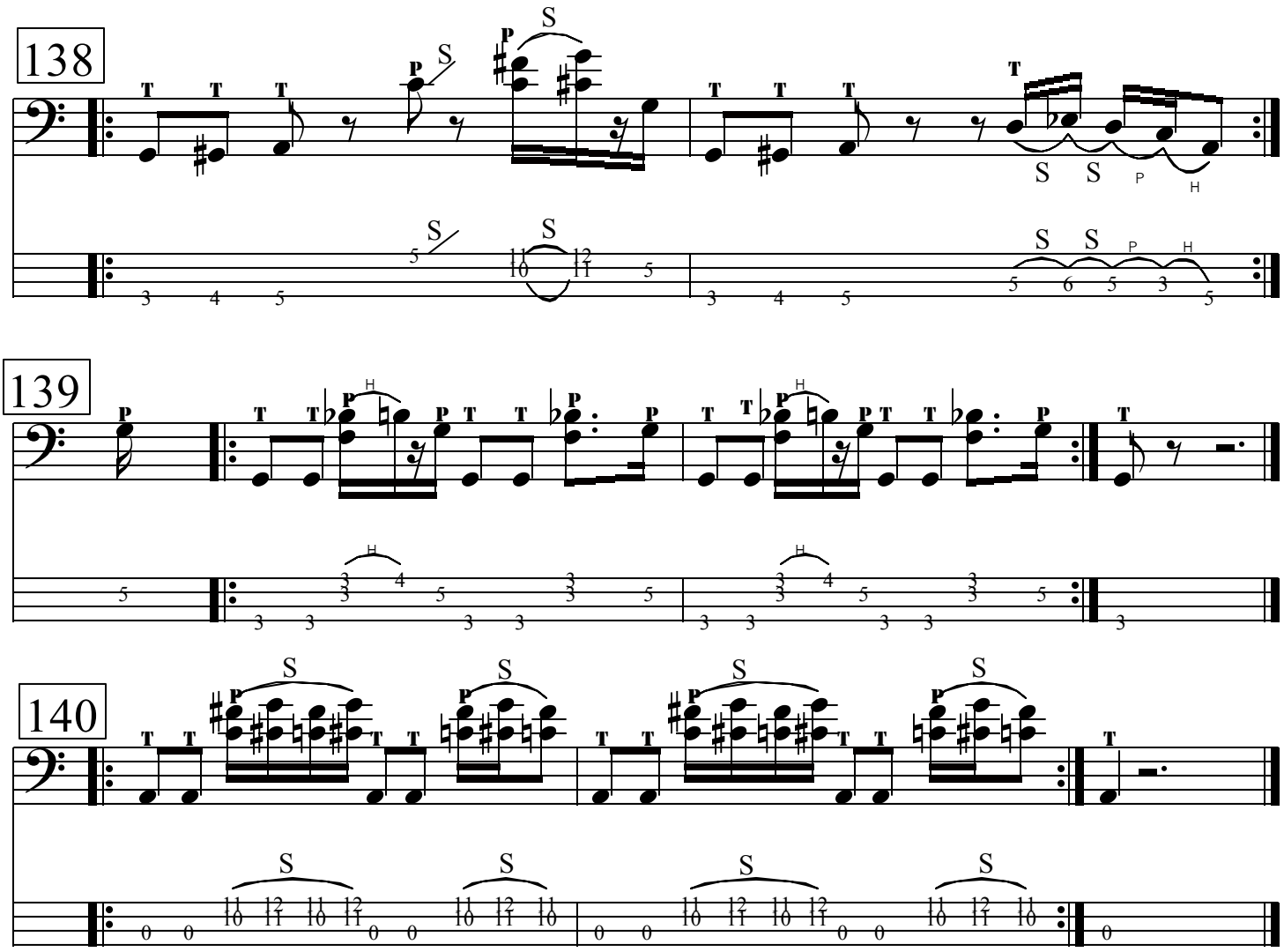
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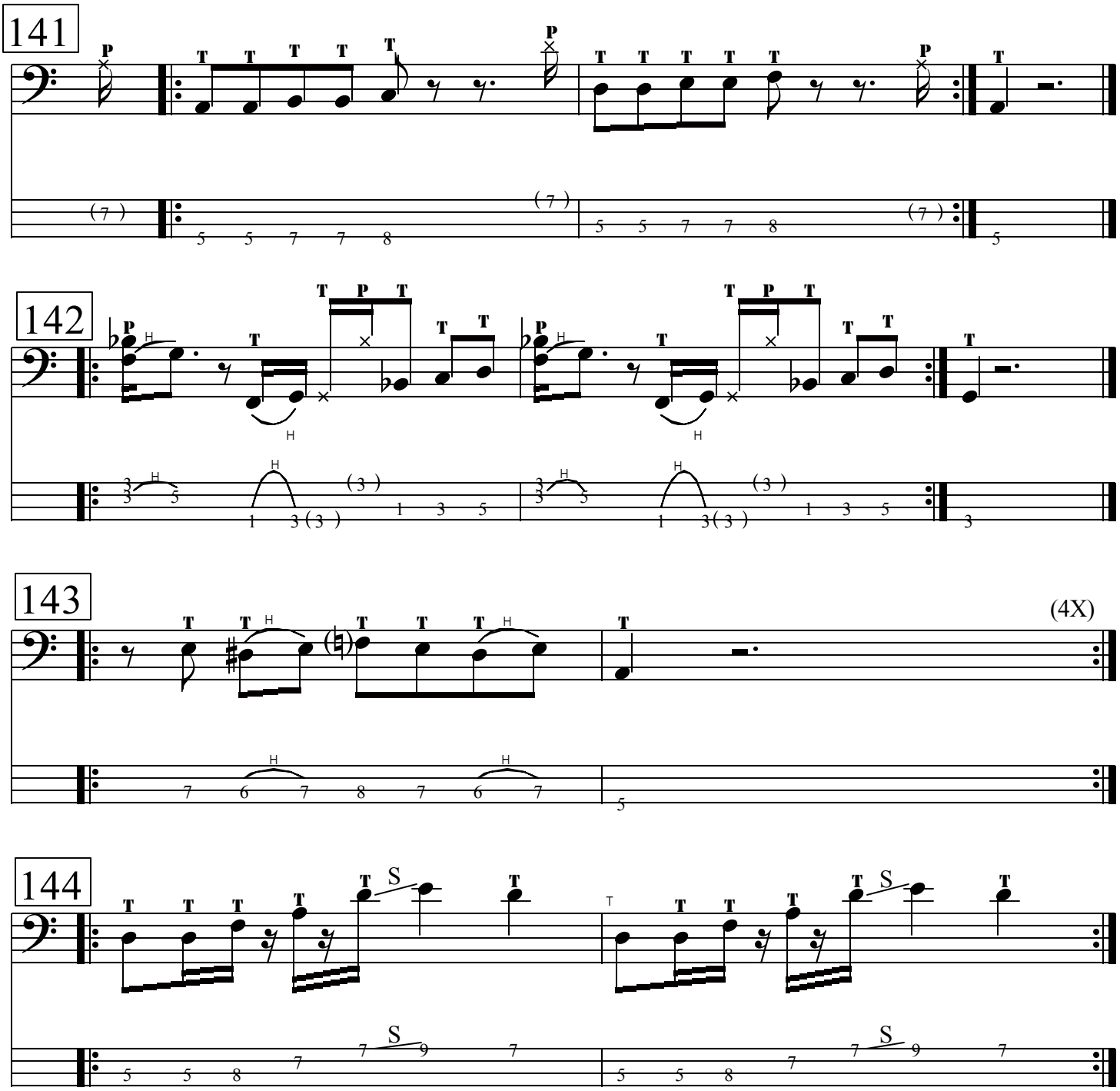
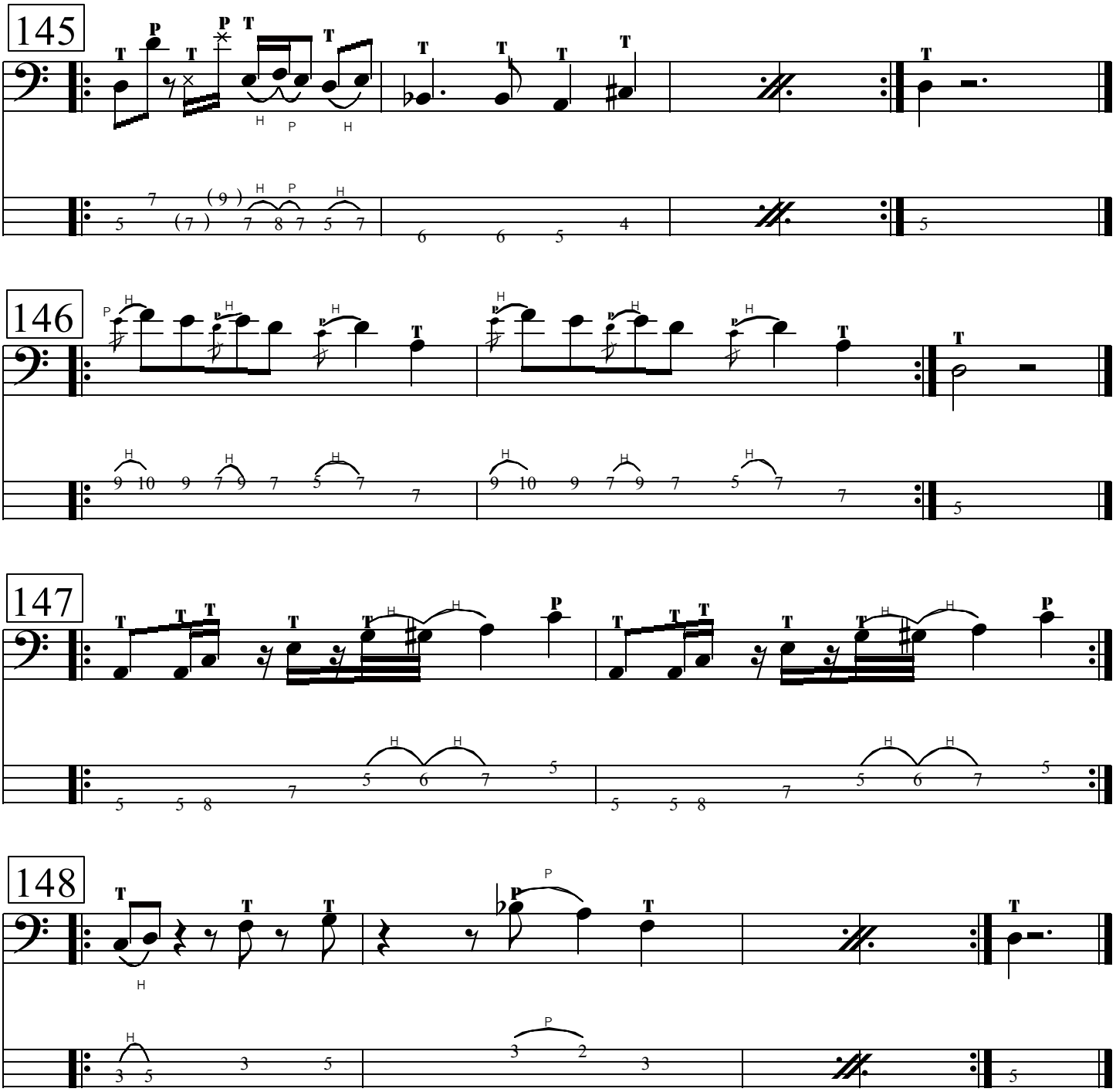
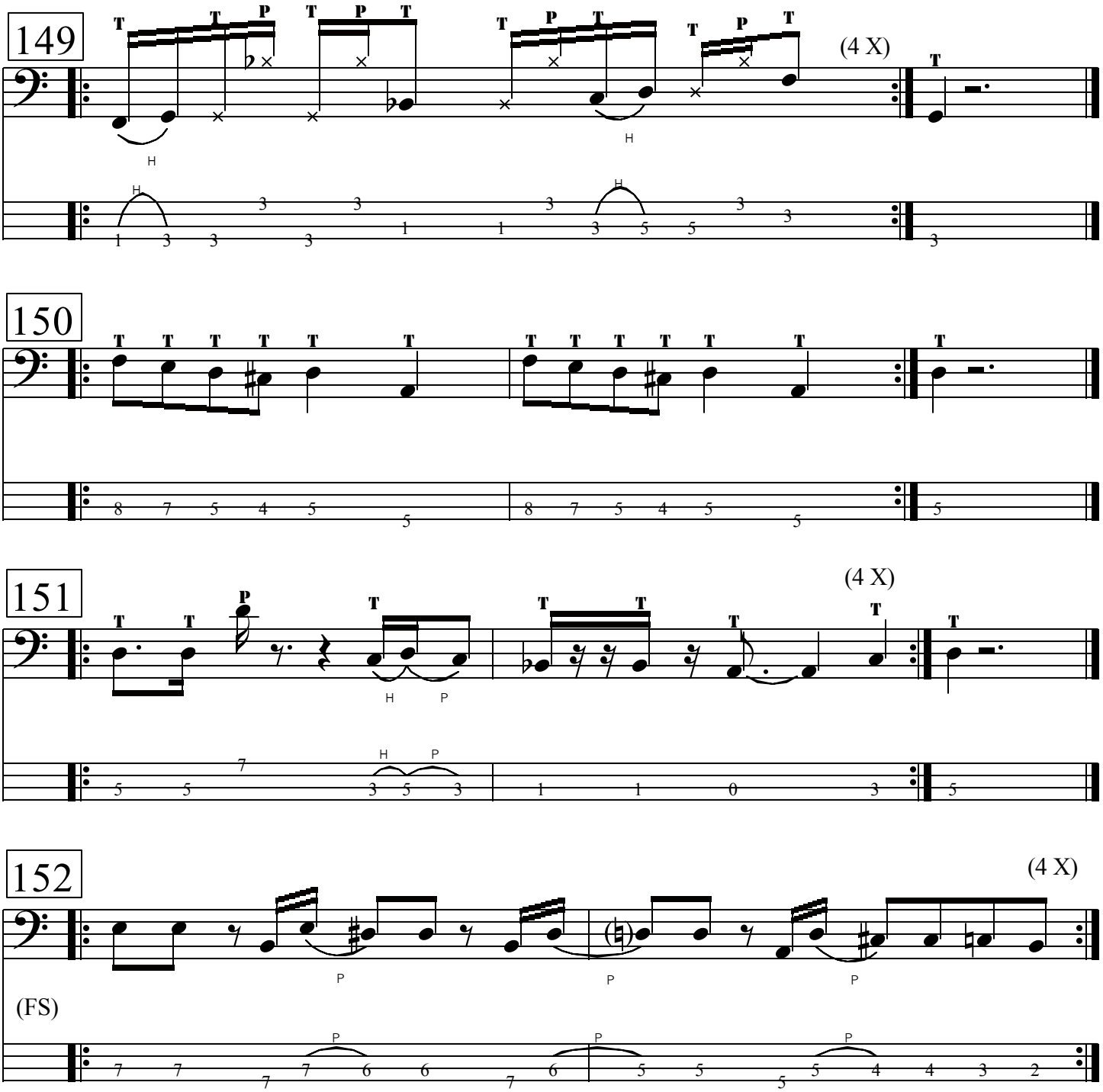
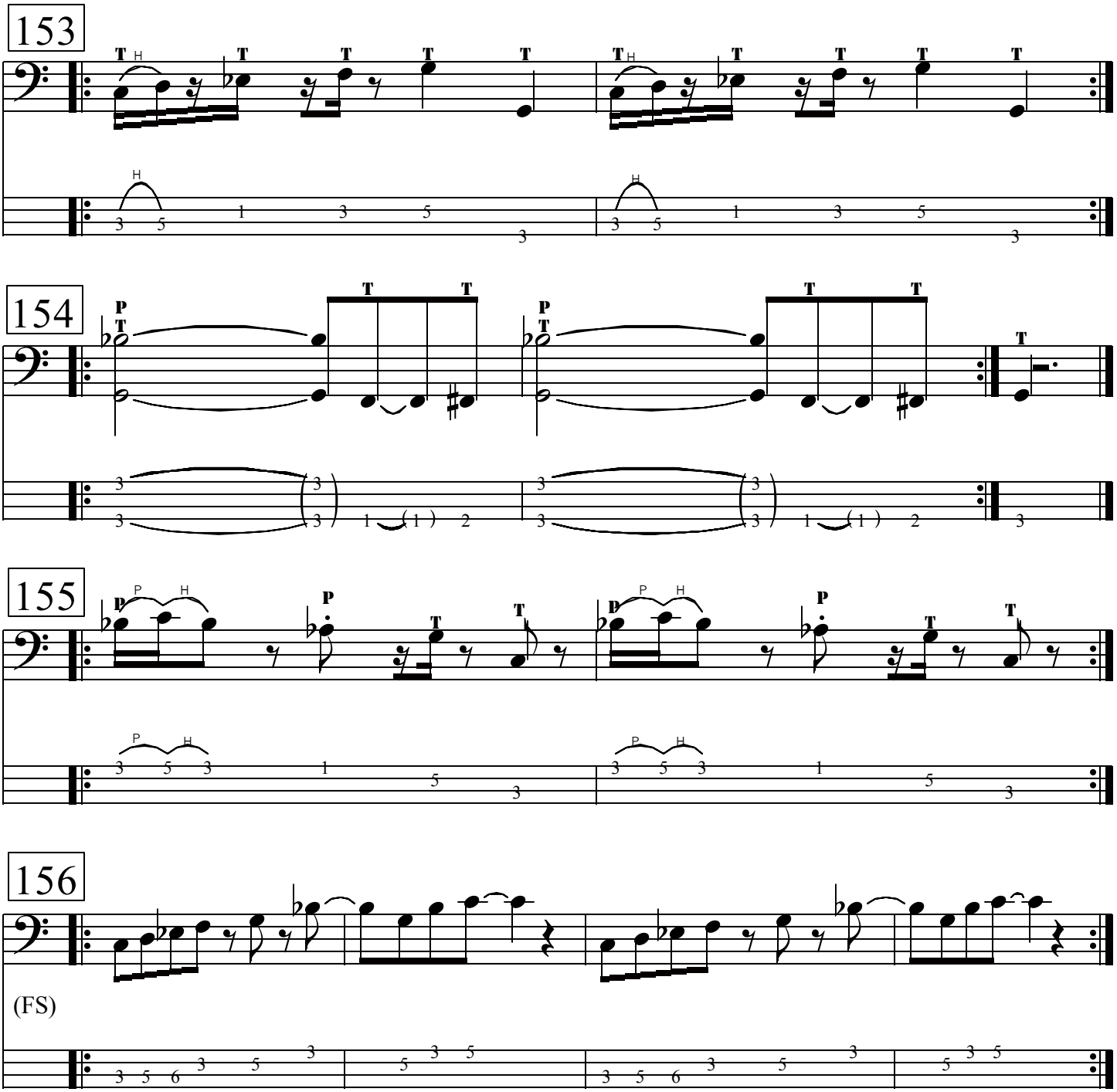
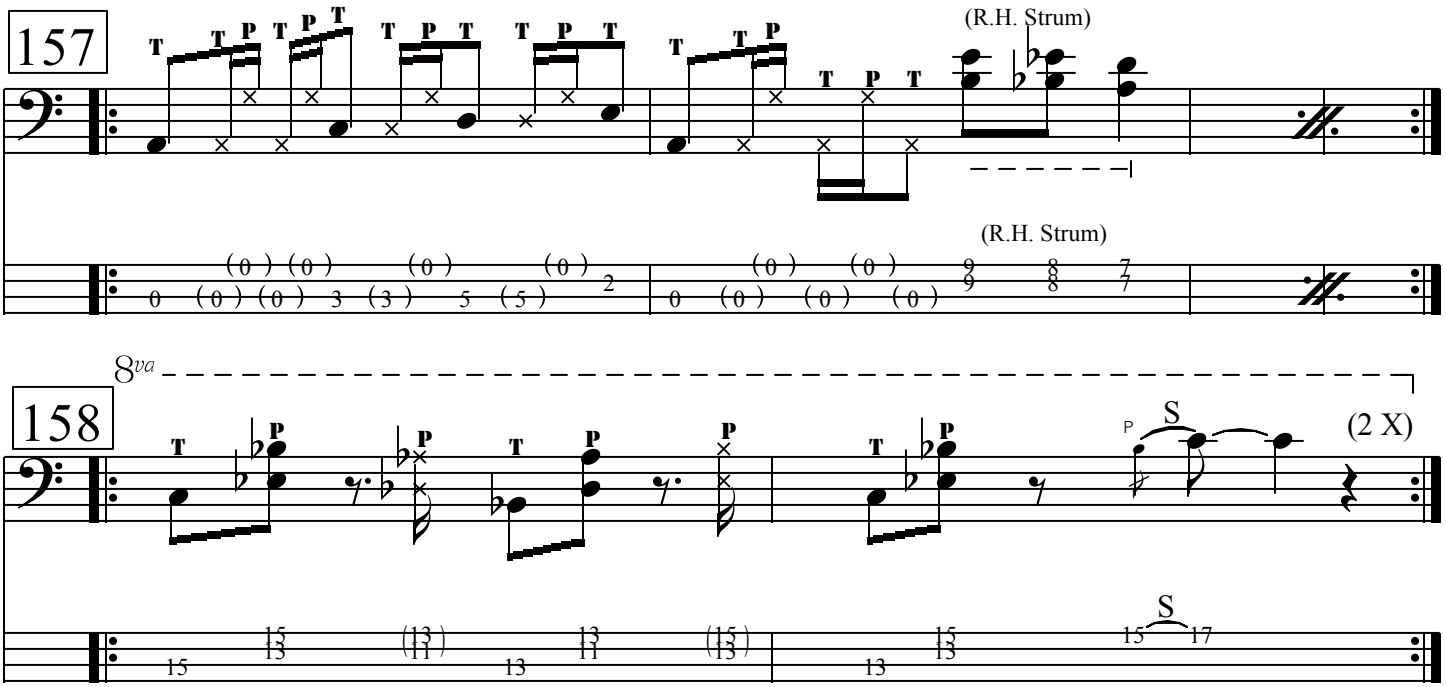
Minor-Natural, Harmonic, Minor 7th



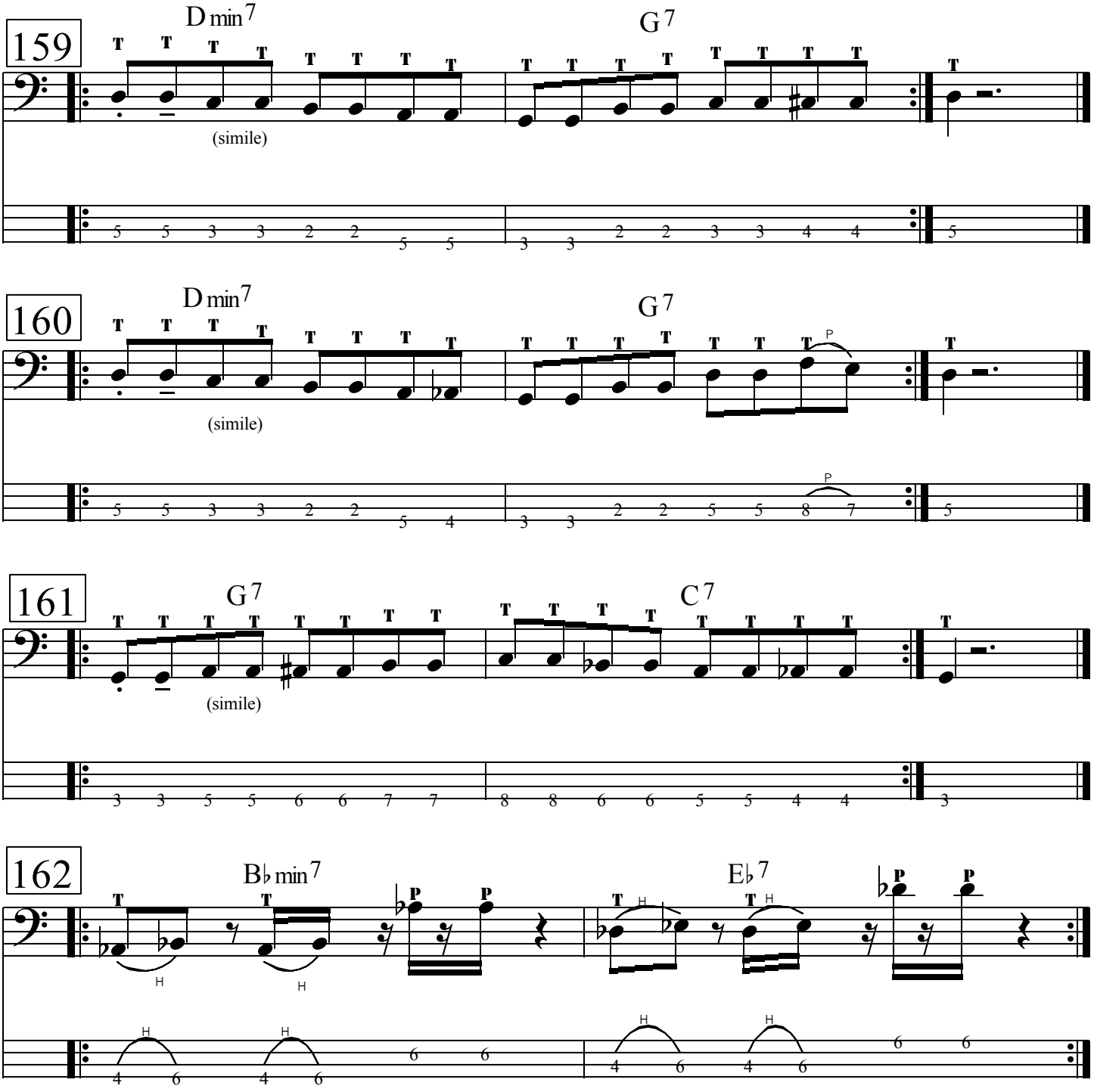

145
146
147
148

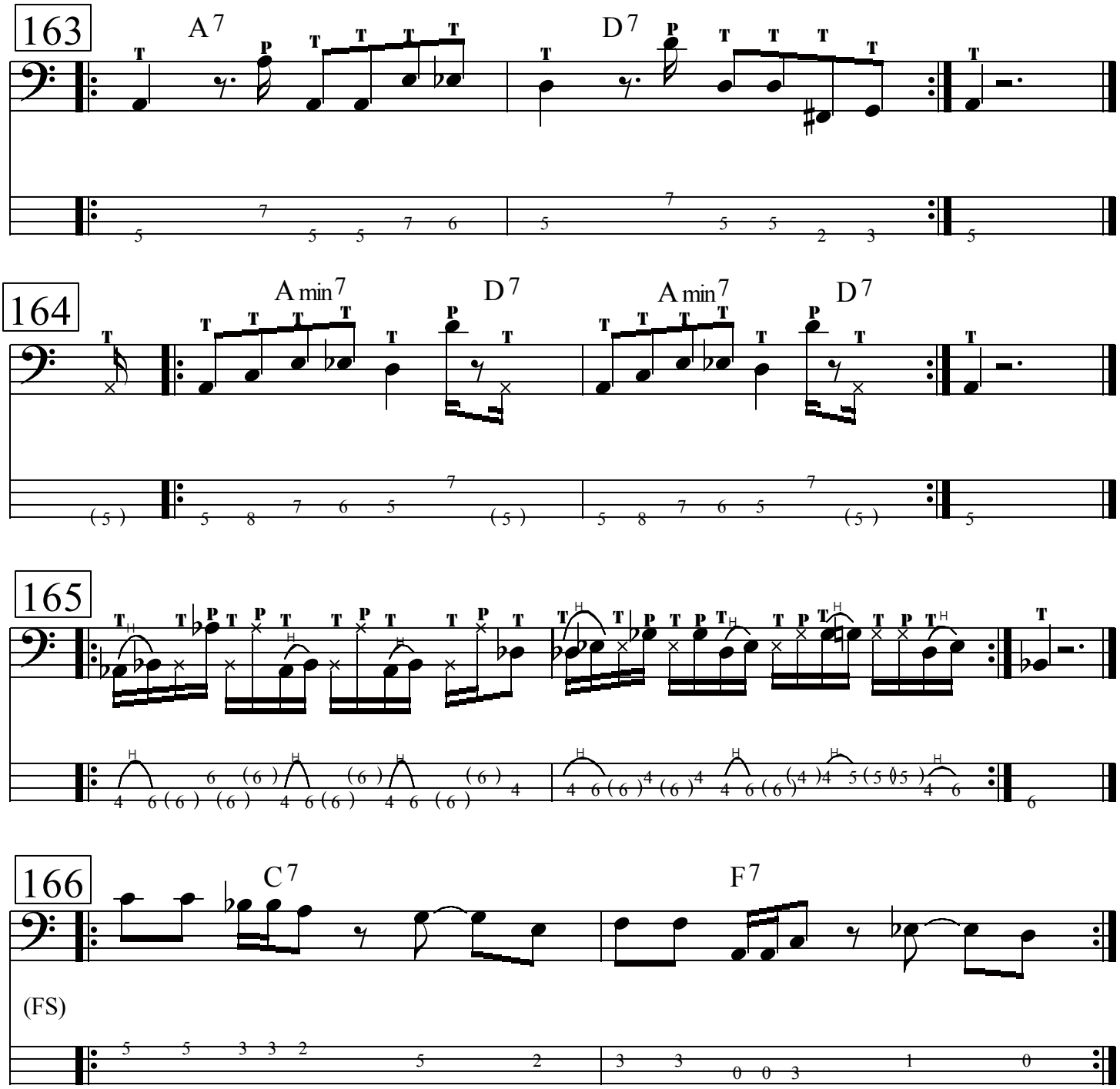

149
(4 X)
150
151
(4 X)
152
(4 X)
(FS)

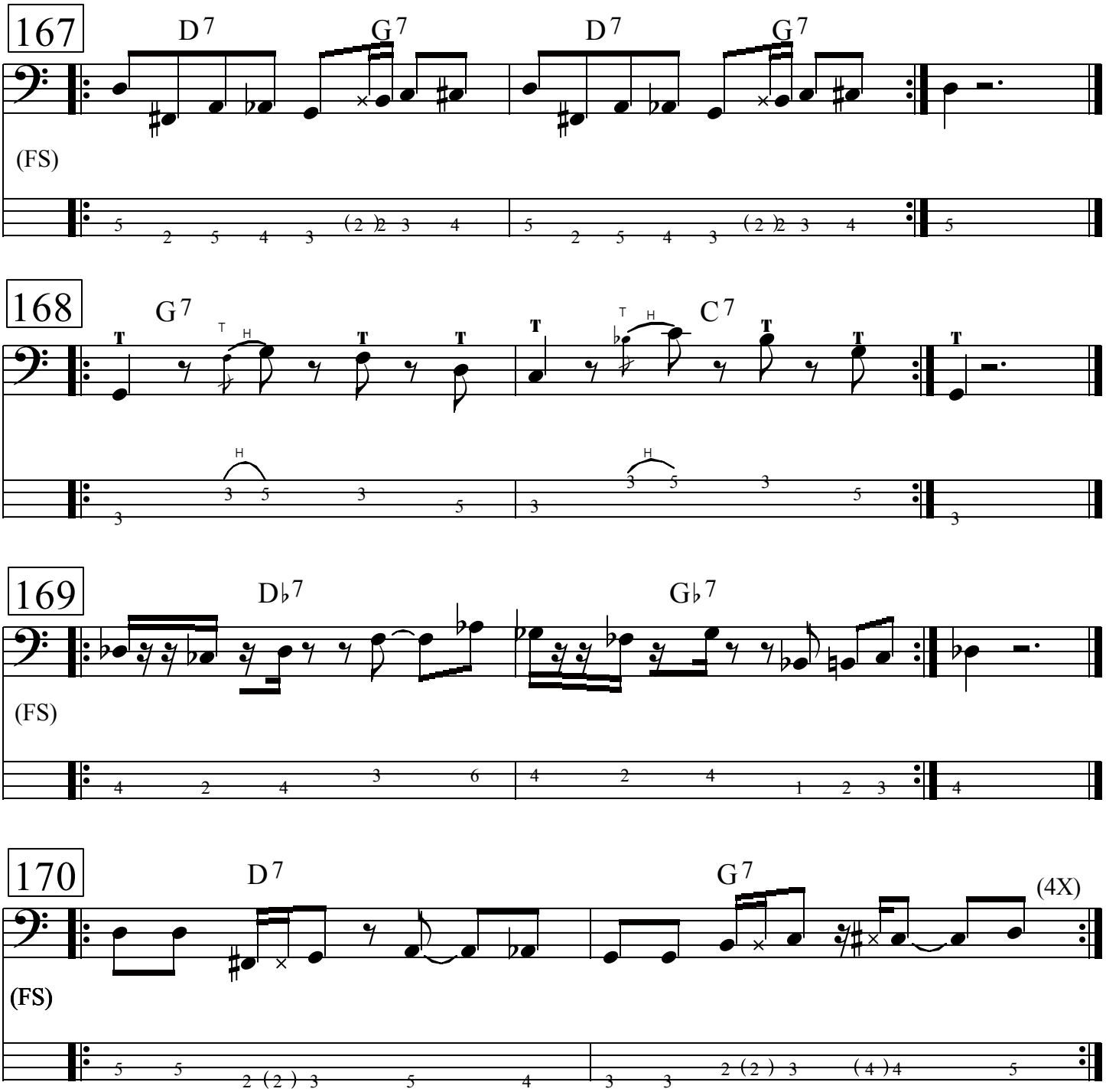

153
154
155
156
(FS)

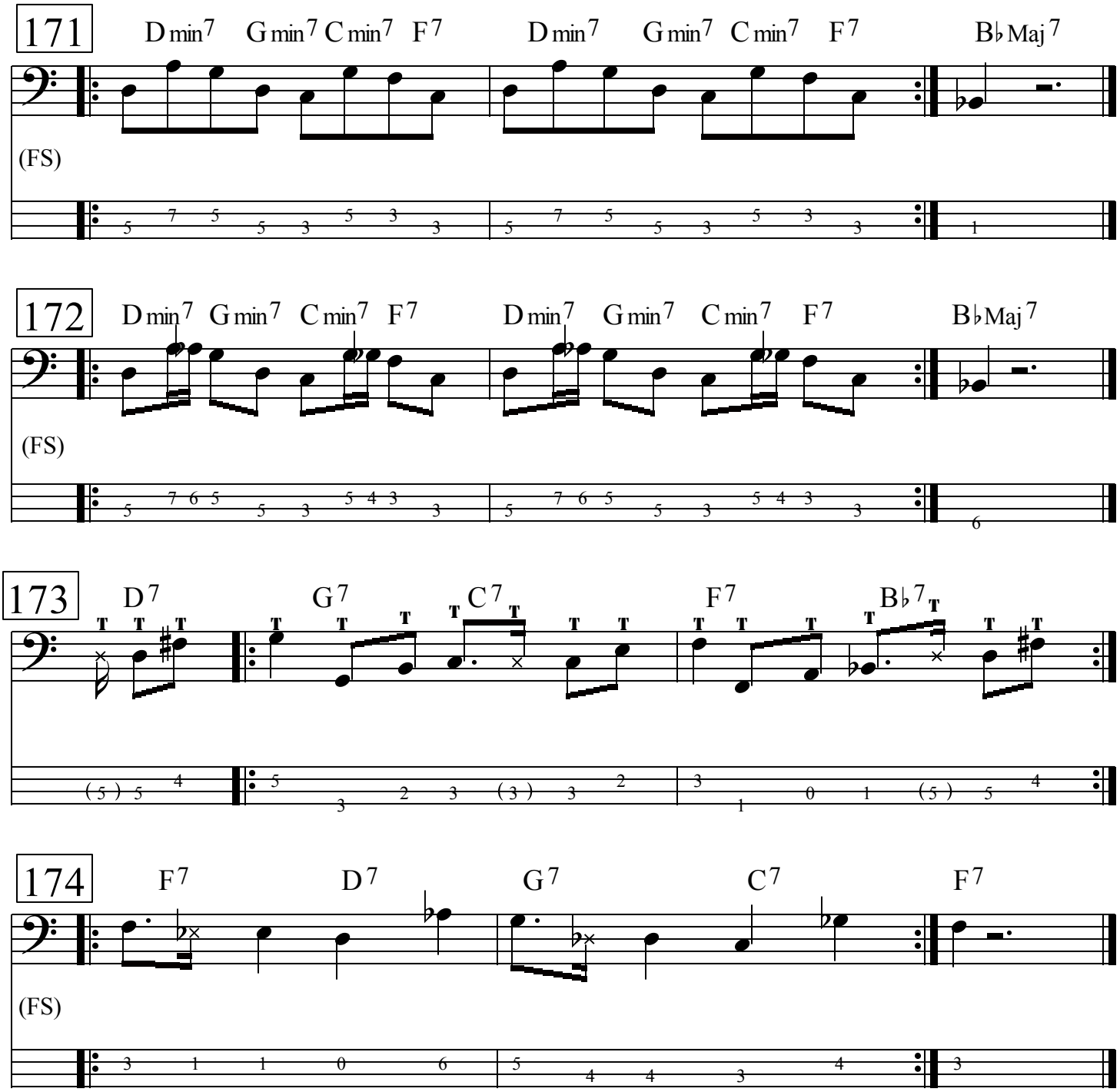

157
(R.H. Strum)
(R.H. Strum)
8va
158
(2 X)

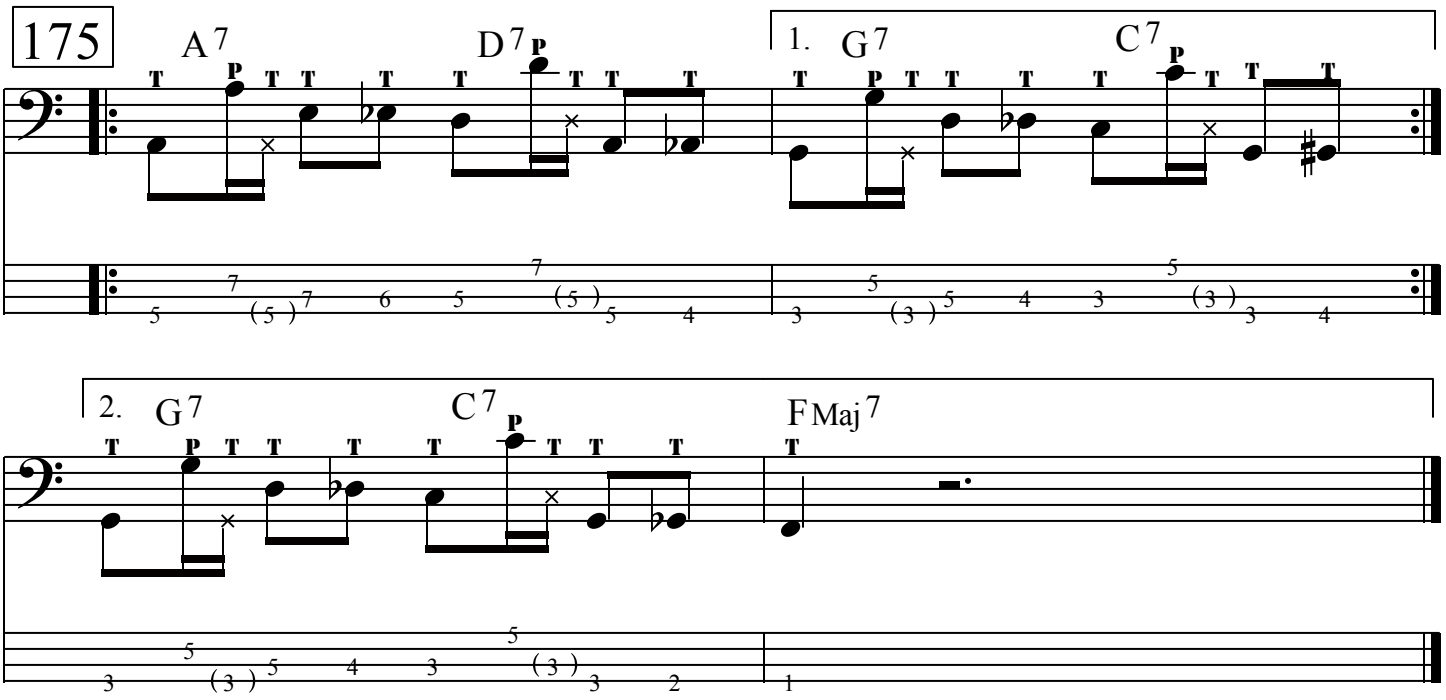
Chord Progressions




163
A7
D7
164
Amin7
D7
Amin7
D7
165
166
C7
F7
(FS)


167
D7
G7
D7
G7
(FS)
168
G7
C7
169
D♭7
G♭7
(FS)
170
D7
G7
(4X)
(FS)


171
Dmin7 Gmin7 Cmin7 F7 Dmin7 Gmin7 Cmin7 F7 B♭Maj7
(FS)
172
Dmin7 Gmin7 Cmin7 F7 Dmin7 Gmin7 Cmin7 F7 B♭Maj7
(FS)
173
D7 G7 C7 F7 B♭7
174
F7 D7 G7 C7 F7
(FS)


175
A7
D7
1. G7
C7
2. G7
C7
FMaj7

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Shaughnessy has been playing bass professionally for almost 20 years, and teaching bass for 15 years. Over the years, he has performed everything from rock and country, to jazz and funk.

John holds an A.S. in Electric Bass Performance from Villa Maria College, (where he studied with former Spyro Gyra bassist Jim Kurzdorfer), as well as a B.A. in music from the University of Buffalo.

Currently, John maintains an active performance and teaching schedule in the Charlotte, NC area , where he leads his own jazz/funk group, JS:3 (www.js3jazz.com).

John may be reached by email at johngoogleplex@carolina.rr.com or js3jazz@carolina.rr.com